Alexipharmacon SPIRITUALE.

Being a

DEFENSATIVE

Againſt the

Poiſon and Sting of Death.

OR,

The great Expedient how to make the Bed of the Grave ſo eaſie, that we may lye down in peace, and take our Reſt.

By *S. S.*

1 Cor. 15. *The ſting of death is ſin.*

--Lethique miſerrima dicar
Cauſa comeſque. Ovid.

LONDON,

Printed by *T. S.* for *Edward Giles* Book-ſeller in *Norwich*, near the Market-place. 1689.

1607/204.

Thomas Jary

His Book

Thomas Jary.

Ejus Liber

1748

Thomas Jary

1752

Mary Ann

Jane

Mary

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BRITISH MUSEUM
15
67
FEB

TO

His worthy Friend *I. L.* Eſq;

SIR,

IT *is not a little ſad to obſerve, with what Zeal and Paſſion, our late unhappy Conflicts about matters, which are not* Tanti, *nor of any conſiderable Weight and Import, have been managed and maintained: Whilſt we have neglected to ſtrive together for the faith of the Goſpel, or to contend earneſtly for that, which was once delivered to the Saints. For theſe things have the ſeamleſs Coat of Chriſt been rent; But chiefly by thoſe who may caſt Lots for their Religion. For if we mark them who cauſe diviſions among us, we ſhall find them to be ſuch, whoſe Principles and Practiſes are moſt forreign to the Power of Godlineſs, and Fundamental Truths of the Goſpel. For this, who is there that fears the Lord, and doth not ſit in darkneſs? Yea he weeps ſore in the night, the apple of his Eye ceaſeth not: To ſee the Churches peace ſacrificed to thoſe turbulent and unquiet Tempers, that are too prevalent in the Children of diſobedience. To this cauſe hath the Apoſtle aſſigned that moſt fatal Effect*

and Consequent. From whence come Wars and Fightings, come they not of your Lusts? These, these are the womb that bare them, and the breasts which gave them suck. But the God of peace hath so far opened the door of hope to us, that we may now expect to see Schism shut out, or none left to enter.

That he will inspire our Master-builders with such wisdom from above, that our Temple may be built with so wide Gates, that all good men may go in and out without justling each other, and yet the beauty of holiness no way sullied, nor the decency of order infringed or violated. That such a temper may be found, that there may be no more complaining in our Streets, nor leading into Captivity. That the Lion may lye down with the Lamb, eat Straw like the Ox; that none may hurt nor destroy in all this holy mount. That as God hath rescued us from others, so that he will perfect his own work, and save us from our selves. But the design of this little Tract, is not to take a prospect of publick affairs, but rather a view of our private State, and to make the best defence we can against the Enemies of our own house; which are so much the more formidable, as the influence of them extends not only to the body, but so far affects the Soul too, that they (As the procuring cause) destroy both in Hell for ever. Such is the power of sin, such is the nature of transgression.

We fight not with Principalities nor Powers, (to theſe we owe obedience, not only for wrath, but for conſcience ſake) but with ſpiritual wickedneſſes in high places. In this caſe, when others are for peace, let us be for war. For the better management of which, this patient and upright man firſt contracted an alliance with Heaven, with which alone there was ſtrength and counſel for it. God only, who is King of it, being able to take away his iniquity, and to caſt it into the depth of the Sea, yea to carry it into the Land of forgetfulneſs, where it ſhould be remembred no more: That when it ſhould be ſought for in the morning of the Reſurrection, or day of Judgment, it ſhould not be found. So that as we have heard of the Patience of Job, *here we have an undeniable Argument of his Prudence, which is juſtified not only by the matter, but time of his enquiry: He being (as was ſuppoſed) not far from the grave, upon which accounts, the enſuing diſcourſe may recommend it ſelf to the conſideration of all mortal men; where alſo you will find, out of what Court this pardon is to be ſued, and that no Authority under Heaven have a* † *Judicial power to forgive ſins, whatever the late prevailing Enemies of our Church may aſſume or arrogate.*

† So *Bellarmine* calls it *poteſtas judiciaria, lib. de Pœnit. tertio, c. 2. Sacerdotes à Chriſto judices factos, & peccata ex poteſtate dimittere, non autem concionando annunciare eſſe remiſſa.* To confirm which Doctrine he alledges

alledges the Authority of the *Lateran* under *Innocent* the Third, of the *Conſtantine*, *Florentine*, and *Tridentine* Councils.

Who have made no ſmall gain of this ſort of Godlineſs, there being no wares in all the Roman Factory more vendible than their Indulgences. Husks they have fed the people with, yet they have made them pay for them as for Childrens bread. Nay to that height have they enhanced the rate of theſe Effects; That they diſpenſe their pardons to none who have not paid the additional duty of an impartial confeſſion of all mortal ſins. Nay ſeveral Authors of theirs, have taken a greater liberty in their inquiry after the faults of men. Nor have the pretended arguments they have uſed, to oblige their confitents to believe the neceſſity of a general confeſſion, been ſo ſtanch, as to perſwade to an acknowledgement of thoſe ſins only which they place under that head †. Petrus Damianus in Serm. de S. Andrea. Quartus gradus eſt confeſſio oris, hæc purè facienda eſt, quia non eſt peccatorum Dicenda, & altera retinenda, neq; levia confitenda & gravia diffitenda.

Con. Trid. Seſſ. 14. Can. 6, 7, 8.

† viz. Mortal.

Medium neceſſarium (*ſaith* Bellarmine,) qui mortali peccato ſe obſtrinxerunt Sacerdoti peccata omnia confiteri. *For the better confirmation of which, they alledged many miraculous arguments, which*

Lib. de Pænit. 3. Cap. 2.

which require no leſs than the faith of miracles to believe; If I may ſtile it ſo: I ſhall inſtance in two or three of them, by the taſt of which, 'twil be no hard matter to gueſs at the flavor of the reſt. Petrus Damianus *in his Epiſtle to* Deſiderius, *concerning the miracles of the Age, tells us of one of the Brethren of the Abby of* Clun *being Sick, begged of God, that if he had forgot any thing which he had committed, that he would reveal it to him, and he would confeſs it, to his Abbot (who was then in preſence.) Upon which he heard a voice, that there was ſomething omitted by him. He then deſired that it might be diſcovered to him; Which was expreſsly brought to his mind, and was by him confeſt to his Superior, and ſoon after died. From whence* Bellarmine *concludes the neceſſity of an intire confeſſion of ſin without any reſervation.*

Certè Certè eſt, vox inquit, quod non confeſſus eſt.

Vox eadem peccatum quoddam ſicut quærebat ſignanter expreſſit.

There is another Story reported by them, of a certain Noble-man called Josbertus de firmitate, *not far from the Abby of* Clarvalle, *who being ſuddenly taken with a ſtupifying diſtemper, was deprived both of his ſenſe and ſpeech; whereupon a Meſſenger was ſent to the Abbot, who coming to him, found that he had lain three days in that condition. His Son much lamented that his Father ſhould die without Confeſſion and*

a Viaticum. *The Abbot finding the whole family melted into tears that ſuch a perſon ſhould die ſo unhappily, ſpoke to them with a loud voice, ſaying, Be it known to you; That this man hath wronged the Church, oppreſſed the Poor, offended God: But if he will repair the injuries done to the Church, and the Poor, he ſhall yet have his ſpeech reſtored, that he may confeſs himſelf, and ſhall receive the Sacrament.*

At which his friends greatly rejoycing, they believed it ſhould be as the Abbot told them: Who had no ſooner finiſht his prayers, and offered the Sacrifice of the Maſs, but there came a Meſſenger to acquaint them that Josbertus *was reſtored to his ſpeech: To whom the Father applying himſelf, he preſently made his Confeſſion, and received the Sacrament. From which Miracle, ſaith* Bellarmine, *we may underſtand the neceſſity of Confeſſion, as alſo the force and efficacy of the holy Sacrifice.* Bonaventure *in the Life of St.* Francis *tells us a ſtory to this purpoſe*; viz. *That a certain Souldier upon a time invited that Saint to dinner, who accepting of his kindneſs, and coming to his houſe, caſt his eyes ſtedfaſtly up to Heaven; telling his Hoſt, that by his intreaties he was prevailed with to come into his houſe to dine with him: But let me, ſaith he*,*

De Pœnit. lib. 3. cap. 12.

* Nec in te maneat quicquam, quod veridicâ confeſſione non pandas.

adviſe

adviſe you, to repent of your ſins, and impartially to confeſs them without any reſervation; which he did, and was immediately ſnatcht away, according to the words of St. Francis, *who had before told him, that he ſhould eat meat in another place. To confirm the truth of this Doctrine, the ſame* * *Author tells us, that St.* Francis, *by his prayers brought an old woman to life again after ſhe was buried, that ſhe might compleat her Confeſſion, ſhe having concealed a certain offence which ſhe was guilty of. As alſo of a Fountain, which at the prayers of the ſame Saint ſprung out of the Earth, of which, whoſoever drank (provided they did firſt confeſs themſelves) were cured of their diſeaſes. But what need I darken Wiſdom with ſuch kind of words as theſe, or rather thoſe Clouds of pretended Miracles, which they uſe as Pillars to ſupport their bowing wall, and tottering fence? And yet I know not how to part with this Topick, without the relation of one inſtance more; which a late Reverend Author hath taken out of Cardinal* Damian. *'Tis of an ugly fellow one* Baſſus, *who dying a ſudden death, as he was coming from a Church dedicated to the holy Virgin; roſe out of his Coffin after he had been in it the greateſt part of a night, deſiring Prayers and Litanies to ſcare away thoſe Devils, or ugly Spirits which watched for him about*

* Bonaventure.

* Lib. 2. cap. 14.

about the room; Who ſaid, This is our prize, for he always lived after the fleſh, and never knew, what the Spirit was His good Angel could ſay nothing in his defence, but that he was dead in the ſervice of their Miſtreſs the Queen of Heaven. The Devils did alledge that God being juſt would do nothing to their prejudice. In ſhort the Devils had ſo much to ſay, and the Angels ſo little, that he was even juſt ready to be given up as their deſerved prey. But the Queen of Heaven coming down in the interim with an Army of Celeſtial Souldiers, and with ſuch a Splendor, that the Devils durſt not look up. Yet ventured to proteſt againſt the wrong which the Angels had done in denying this fellow to them, which was their due, the Queen did own he had been a ſinner, but yet her Son and Lord would not ſuffer one who had been her ſervant, or ended his days in her Service, to periſh or to become Subject to their cruelty: Who alſo had confeſſed, though he had not time to do Penance. But here the Devil replyed what a Villain he was, and what ugly abomination he had concealed from his Confeſſor, (which the revived man did alſo acknowledge to be true.) At which the mother of mercy was ſtartled, (for that, if any, was the unpardonable ſin:) But at laſt recovering her ſelf ſhe bad him go again to his body, and confeſs to ſuch a Prieſt (as ſhe named) what theſe Spirits lay to your charge.

charge. And in my name charge Friars, (whom alſo ſhe named) to take upon them thy Pennance; then come again without delay, for I will not ſtir hence till you come. Which being done, ſaith the Cardinal, he died as ſweetly as if he had fallen aſleep. From which ſeveral articles of the Roman doctrine are (after their manner proved.)

1. *That the Virgin is to be worſhipped and her Churches in her honour viſited.*

2. *That though a man lives a ſinful and wicked life, yet paying ſervice to the Virgin* Mary *is ſufficient to Pardon tranſgreſſion and to take away iniquity.*

3. *That ſin muſt be confeſſed without any concealment upon pain of damnation.*

4. *That the repentance which we omit in our own perſons, may be done for us by others. But I believe they'l find that he who repents by another may go to heaven; but it will be by a Proxy.*

But their plenary confeſſion is what we here aim at, and therefore ſhall not digreſs from that. To which they add in recompenſe of ſo good a work, their plenary Indulgences and Pardons which they have treaſured up to that degree that ſhould our ſins outſtrip the hairs of our heads, yet they outvie the number of them. As is evident by the Grant of Gregory *when he dedicated the* Laterane *Church,* viz. *Of as many Indulgences as there could*

Quot guttæ cadant si continuò pluat per tres dies & noctes.

could fall drops of rain in a continual distillation for the space of three days and three nights; Who fearing by that Prodigal, or rather prodigious bequest he might exhaust the treasury of the Church; our Saviour (as they say) appeared to him, bidding him yet to make further Grants, for the people had need of them. Chem. Exam. Part. 4. *They tell us that when the Pope gave the first Indulgence in this Church, that Angels did appear, and in the presence of all the people cryed,* Amen. *And that when the heads of* St. Peter *and St.* Paul *are shown; Those of* Rome *have pardons for three thousand years; those of the neighbourhood for six thousand years, and those who came from far for twelve thousand years. Nay* Silvester *and* Gregory *who consecrated the said Church, gave such an unaccountable number of Indulgences that no* Arithmetician, *but only God himself could reckon up. But this is so large a Subject that it would rather require a Volume than a short Epistle to treat upon; yet I must not here omit that these offerings, which they so plentifully make to the people, are not things, which will cost them nothing; If they have no penny, they'll have no* Pater-noster. *The price and penance they set upon their effects must be submitted to, and then 'tis no hard matter (according to them)*

Plures det indulgentias, populus enim his opus habent.

them) for a rich man to enter into life: So profitable are riches in the day of wrath; That he who gains this world needs not loſe his Soul. So that covetouſneſs is the only Sin that can effectually damn a wealthy man with them. But it were an inexcuſable madneſs to venture upon ſuch Quacks and Mountebanks, when Job *directs us to a Phyſician of ſo great value; May he pardon all your iniquities, and heal all your diſeaſes, may he count every hair of your head, and write them down in the book of Providence, but more eſpecially your name in the book of life.*

And not yours only; But that worthy perſon's alſo, with whom it hath pleaſed God to bleſs you, in the neareſt alliance. Long may you live and love together, maintaining the Unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. Which was never ſure betwixt any Pair, tied of a faſter knot.

Fœlices ter & amplius
Quos irrupta tenet copula, nec malis
Divulſus querimoniis,
Suprema citius Solvet amor die,
*Horat. lib.*1. *Od.* 13.

And ſince it hath pleaſed God to bleſs you, with the fruit of the womb, may thoſe Olive branches about your table, be ſo many plants of righteouſneſs, ever budding, bloſſoming and bringing forth Almonds, I mean the fruits of it, in their ſeaſon.

Which

Which as it will give them a better name than that of Sons and Daughters; So will it, I dare ſay, fill your hearts with greater gladneſs than when their Corn Wine, and Oyl do much increaſe. Which are the beſt returns I can make for thoſe great obligations you have laid upon

Your Faithful Friend

and humble

Servant

S. Snowden.

An

AN
ADVERTISEMENT.

THE Eyes of the Author being held ſo often waking by an acute and dangerous diſtemper, had juſt cauſe to fear they would grow heavy with the ſleep of death; as alſo to reflect upon ſuch Expedients as might prepare the way, and give the ſafeſt paſſage and tranſition to a better, and more eaſie life. Particularly on the enſuing * Theme. But the ſtorm being allayed by him whom the Winds and Waves obeyed; he could not but make a little ſtand, and taking a view of that ſtony Rock, againſt which his earthen Veſſel had been well nigh daſht in pieces. In which joyful tranſport the enſuing Poem was produced, which being thought but a ſcant deſcription of the nature of his Trouble, and ſenſe of his Deliverance, he thought it not impertinent here to inſert it: If the Reader ſhall think otherwiſe, he may overlook it, and proceed.

* Job 7. 20.

Poema

Poema Eucharisticon, de calculo bonitate divina & Arte medica excreto.

ACre per anguſtos volvens curvoſq; meandros,
Saxum, continuis quod vix bis quinq; diebus
Abſolvebat iter, Pedetentim ſerpſit in arcto
Tramite, poſt renum diſrupta repagula; Quorum
Fingitur, incudem, Petrefactum fulmen, aduſtâ
Conflatum maſsâ, cæco quod torruit antro.
In quo ſaxifico denſantur humore vapores
In ſilicem, mihimet durum & cruciabile telum.
Cuſpide dilacerans peracutâ vaſa bicorni
Dente venenato corrodens viſcera, flammas
Dum fundunt liquidas, renum Veſuvius Ætna
Ignivomi, teneros urentes flamine nervos.
Unda etenim fluidum dum tota liqueſcit in ignem,
*Guttatim ſtillat, potius ſcintillat, aduren*s
Senſibilem (veluti ferro candente canalem
Non dicenda quidem eſt hujus lanienæ, loquendi
Artes exuperat, Balbutit lingua, Poetæ
Threnes contemnit, dolor hic vetat eſſe diſertum
Quemvis, pro nihilo ducendus Rhetor; Ocelli
Hoc tantum lachrymis poſſunt narrare madentes,
Vel dolor ex digito, vel cum ſingultibus ægri
Plena domus, gemitu aut planctu, dignoſcitur. Illinc
Concluſum eſt, Siculi quo vix novêre Tyranni
Majus tormentum---- At

At tu ſumme Deus, tu clementiſſime, nobis
Otia feciſti pergrata, placabile numen
Fundi perpetuos oculorum nubibus imbres
Noluit. Horriſono ventorum turbine motos
Compoſuit fluctus, atq; Euroclydona Catenis
Cœlitùs obſtrinxit. Portu jam fixa ſalutis
Anchora concuſſæ (ſumma cum pace) carinæ.
Quid tibi retribuam?(Nautarum Maximus)Aram
Non tener à noſtris ab ovilibus imbuet agnus;
Sed cor contritum lateri lethalis arundo
Eſt extracta manu quæ miſit, Calculus, inſtar
Immotæ ſteterit rupis, quem major Arone
Continuum ſolvens percuſſerit, unde repente
Quæ ſuppreſſa fuit ſtagnans urina refluxit,
Dum ſaxum liquidæ fluctu protruditur undæ.
Vipera jam prodit duplici quæ dente momordit.
Viſcera, quæ dudum genuêre, Deuſque molarem
(Pectora qui rabidè contrivit noſtra) benignus
Fregit & expulſit, movit de ſede. Profecto
Hinc & ab hoc ſaxo, tibi condam altare (Jehova)
Eben Ezer erit, nullis delebile ſæclis.
Proxima jam medico debetur gratia, cujus
Inſculptum nomen ſit in ipſo marmore, foſſo
Viſceribus noſtris, ſit cordi proximus ille
Qui tulit auxilium, ſit terq; quaterq; beatus,
In cœlum ſerus redeat, vitamq; ſerenam
Det Deus inſtantem, ſæclo veniente rependat
Æternam in gremium ſibi cum conſorte ſalutem.

Quod fuit durum pati meminiſſe dulce.

A Thank-Offering, or Eucharistical Poem upon the voiding of a Stone, through God's bleſſing, and the Phyſicians skill.

A Jagged Stone deſcending through a pent,
And winding paſſage, had compleatly ſpent
More than ten days, ere it abſolv'd its courſe;
For paſſing through a Needles Eye, or worſe,
It mov'd by leſs than inches, having paſt
The Reins, in which this Thunderbolt was caſt,
Compact and petrifi'd into a Stone,
Exactly form'd and faſhion'd, as upon
An Anvil, made and moulded of a Craſs,
Aduſt and parcht, coagulated Maſs:
Bak't in a private Oven, where a ſmart
And petrifying humor fram'd a dart;
Condenſing Vapors to a very Flint,
Which with its double point did leave a print,
Upon the tender Veſſels, and did gnaw,
With an envenom'd Tooth, the entrails raw,
Whilſt, like to *Aetna*, or *Veſuvius*,
They caſt out fluid flames and ſulphurous,
Scorching the nervous parts, that nothing nigher
Could be compar'd, unleſs 'twere liquid fire,
Unto the Urine, which in drops diſtils,
Or rather ſparks, thoſe fiery particles,
Which did the nervous channel cauterize,
As with a fire-brand. Alas! the ſize

And

And meaſure of this grief, what tongue can take?
It baffles all its Art, it cannot make
A fitten Landskip of this miſery,
It doth deſpiſe it laughs at Poetry;
And for the Rhetorician's learned Pen,
It maketh nought of that, it may be when
The eyes run down with tears, that language may
Give ſome deſcription, when the hand does lay,
Or when the finger points unto the part,
(Which are the moſt expreſſive terms of Art
Or Nature rather) when the Patients moans,
Ring awk all o're the houſe, with peals of groans;
We gueſs thoſe torments, worſe all *Sicily*
Could ne're contrive, with all their cruelty.
But oh! the great, the kind *Jehovah* wrought
A Relaxation, for now he thought
'Thad rain'd enough, & therefore clear'd the skies,
Diſpell'd the clouds from off theſe ſtormy eyes,
Becalm'd the Waves, and levell'd every Hill,
Rais'd by the Whirlwind, bidding them be ſtill:
Binding *Euroclydon* up faſt in Chains;
So that a quiet Harbour now contains
My ſhaken Veſſel, which at Anchor rides
Securely, mauger all the Winds and Tydes.
But what returns muſt be to him, that did
Defend it from this Wrack? A tender Kid
Out of the flock is a mean Sacrifice,
A broken heart, that, that he won't deſpiſe.
The very hand which ſhot this flaming Dart,
Was pleas'd to quench it, and allay the ſmart.
The Stone, which like a Rock that's fix'd, ſtuck;
Till one, who greater was than *Aaron*, ſtruck,
And broke the Bed in pieces, letting go

The Water-floods, which were dam'd up below.
When by the ſtreaming of the Water-ſpout,
The cauſe of ſo much torment guſhed out.
See now that yiperous Monſter which did tear
With double teeth, the Womb that bred it there;
Behold that nether Mill-ſtone that did grind
The very inwards, now is by a kind
And gentle hand remov'd. This Stone ſhall be
A laſting Monument of Thanks to thee.
My God, I'll build an Altar of it, and will call
It *Eben Ezer*, which no Ages ſhall
Deface. The next acknowledgment is due
Unto that skilful kind Phyſician, who
Ought t' have his name upon that Stone inſcrib'd;
Which from the quarry that was petrifi'd
Within theſe bowels came. He needs muſt be,
(Oh! very dear, who eas'd his miſery.
More than thrice happy be he, which hath done
The Cure, long may he live, late may his Sun
Set; may his preſent Day be far from Night,
And Clouds, like *Barnaby*, be't long and bright.
Whence forward may Health everlaſting be
To him, and to his other Moity.

Job

Job 7. 21.

And why doſt thou not pardon my tranſgreſſion and take away mine iniquity? For now I ſhall ſleep in the duſt, amd thou ſhalt ſeek me in the morning, but I ſhall not be.

AMong all the fiery darts of the wicked one, there's none ſo flaming as theſe in the quiver of the Text, *Tranſgreſſion*, *Iniquity*; Satan 'tis true ſhot many a poliſht ſhaft at *Job*, which wounded him in his Eſtate, his Body, yea and Reputation too. Thoſe that were his friends thought his caſe as foul as his carcaſs when he ſcrapt it upon the Dunghil. *Remember, I pray thee, who ever periſht being innocent, or where were the righteous cut off*, Job 4. 7. Job 8. 6. *If thou wert pure & upright, ſure now he would awake for thee, and make the habitations of thy righteouſneſs proſperous.* But theſe words preſent us with thoſe darts which ſtab'd his very Soul,

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inflicting that wound in his conscience, which is frequently incurable, alwaies intolerable, for there's none can bear it. But to have this Fire and Brimstone flash in a man's face, and to be the portion of his cup, when he is ready to tast of death, and to have the Snares thereof spread before his feet, when he is stepping into the grave: An horrible tempest arising when he is just lanching into the vast Ocean of Eternity. To have transgression unpardoned, and iniquity not taken away, when we are ready to sleep in the dust, is a case so dreadful that 'tis hard to imagine worse to express. It being of too vast dimensions to enter into the heart of man to conceive, what is the height, length, depth and breadth of so sad an Estate. A circumstance sufficient to try the patience of *Job*: And as cogent an argument to prevail for a speedy return of mercy. 'Tis as if he had said, Lord I know not how soon it may prove too late. If thy pardoning grace prevents not the morning watch, the Shadows of death, that everlasting evening will be drawn over me. And if my Silver Cord be once loosed, farewell my anchor of hope, to which 'tis only fixt. If my pitcher be once broken at the fountain, it will be an incapable Subject to receive the waters of life. If I lye down in the grave; If I slumber

in

in the duſt, (for mine eyes are grown heavy with the ſleep of death) I may in the morning be ſought for *inter oſſa & Calvearia*, that ſtuff and rubbiſh of the grave but ſhall not be found at leaſt capable of relief; It will be μετὰ πίλεμον συμμαχία, like a cordial to him that hath given up the Ghoſt.

Oculos in morte gravatos. Ovid.

This former part of the verſe, (For 'tis not my deſign to ſpeak much of the latter) Preſents us,

1. With the paſſionate and earneſt prayer of this good man. [Why doſt thou not pardon my tranſgreſſion, and take away mine iniquity?]

2. His allegation and plea for a kind and ſpeedy anſwer, [For now I ſhall ſleep in the duſt.]

1. In the firſt of theſe, the *form* and *manner* of the propoſition is obſervable, which ſpeaks how fervent the Effectual prayer of this righteous man was, which is two ſeveral ways expreſt.

1. By way of expoſtulation [Why doſt thou not pardon my tranſgreſſion?]

2. By way of reduplication. [*Pardon* my *Tranſgreſſion, take away* mine *iniquity.*]

2. The Subject matter of his Petition. [Pardon my tranſgreſſion, &c.] For this he bow-

ed the knee before the throne of grace, for this he besought the Lord. A thing becoming his patience, beseeming his prudence. For who would not light a Candle, sweep the house, turn every Stone, & with his Soul make diligent search for a Pearl of so great a price?

First, By way of *Expostulation*, which sometimes bears the force and Import,

1. Of a strong and peremptory denial. Behold and see, was there ever sorrow like to my sorrow, wherewith the Lord hath afflicted me in the day of his fierce wrath? That is, never was there sorrow like unto mine. Nor hath he put such a Cup of astonishment into any hand as he hath into mine, which hath filled me with bitterness, and made me drunk with Wormwood.

2. Sometimes of a Passionate and Earnest Prayer and Request. And then the sense of the words is this; *Oh that my sins were pardoned, & mine iniquity taken away*; *Or, Lord, wilt thou not pardon my sin, & take away mine iniquity? Wilt thou not say to these mountains, Be removed & cast into the Sea?* Such a sense may the words of *Sisera's* Mother bear, *She cryed through the latteſs, why is his chariot so long in coming? why tarry the wheels of his Chariot?* Judg. 5. 28. That is, *Oh that they would come, that I might see him return with Triumph, & with a prey of divers Colours; Oh that I could*

could hear the pranſing of the horſes, and the noiſe of their hoofs: So here, *Why tarry the Wheels of his Chariot?* Why is mercy ſo long in coming? *Phoſphore redde diem*: Will theſe ſhades of night never be diſpelled and diſſipated? *Oh that the day ſpring from on high would viſit me! For I wait for God more than they that wait for the morning*: *Yea, I ſay unto you, more than they that wait for the morning.* Which brings me to the ſecond thing, the Reduplication.

Secondly, *Pardon*; *take away* my *tranſgreſſion*, mine *iniquity*; expreſſions ſomething differing in their ſound, but of the ſame deſign and ſenſe. Like the Twins of *Harpocrates*, that wept together; ſo do theſe words mutually lament the ſad and doleful eſtate of this man of ſorrow, who being at the brink of Eternity, was ready to loſe Anchor; but alas! it was not ſo ſure and ſtedfaſt as he could wiſh. This makes him lift up both his hands, and ingeminate his cry, My God, my God, wilt thou now forſake me? It was the *Roman* Cuſtom, to cover the Malefactor's face, before he was executed. Sure *Job* was in the dark, the light of his eyes, or what was worſe, the light of God's countenance was eclipſed; ſo that he could not

Lictor, colliga manus, caput obnube, &c. Liv. Orat.

ſee

ſee any thing which concerned his peace.

And that which was a further Supplement to his trouble, adding ſorrow to his affliction, was, his apprehenſion that he was about to lie down in the grave, to ſleep in the duſt; & then they would be for ever hid from his eyes. Sure the man according to God's own heart, was in no ſmall conflict, when he doubles his complaints againſt his ſin, and petitions to the Throne of Grace for deliverance; *Againſt thee, thee only have I ſinned, and done this evil in thy ſight; waſh me throughly from mine iniquity, and cleanſe me from my ſin*: Surely he had no ſmall ſtorm lay upon him; he was afflicted and toſſed with no ſmall tempeſt, when the waves rode thus upon each others backs. The fire undoubtedly was hot within, which cauſed the Tongue thus to run over, in ſuch a ſacred and fervent paſſion. We may obſerve the ſame Tranſport in the Prophet *Daniel*, when he was zealous for the Cauſe and People of the Lord, *Dan. 9. 15. Oh Lord hear! oh Lord forgive, hearken and do! defer not for thine own ſake, Oh my God! for thy City and People are called by thy Name.* When the heart is ruminating an ill matter, the Tongue thus becomes like the Pen of a ready Writer, to deſcribe in a Rhetorical paſſion its own miſeries. The Poet's words may

Pſal. 51. 4.

eaſily,

eaſily, and with truth enough be inverted, *Noſcit dolor eſſe diſertus.* For the Bird of Paradice in the Text never ſung more ſweetly, than when Satan had ſet a Thorn againſt his Breaſt.

Secondly, The Matter of his Petition; *Pardon my tranſgreſſion, and take away mine iniquity.* As if he had ſaid, Lord, my ſins are written in thy Book; oh! there's many an *Item*, a ſad Account thou maiſt charge me with, but Lord, wilt thou not croſs thy Book, and blot out all mine iniquities for thy Names ſake? *The Arrows of the Almighty ſtick faſt in me, yea my wounds ſtink and are corrupt; my ſore runs in the night;* How glad ſhould I be that they were bound up with Oyl, and mollified with Ointment? But eſpecially that the Lord would heal my backſlidings, and love me freely. Might he pleaſe but to pardon my tranſgreſſion, and take away mine iniquity, then, though I ſhould ere long ſleep in the duſt, yet I ſhould be ſatisfied with his likeneſs when I awake. I am going the way of all fleſh, and the time of mine appointed change is coming on; but, good Lord, before I die, bury my tranſgreſſion in the grave of Oblivion; ſet thy Seal ſo faſt upon its Sepulchre, that it may never riſe again to condemn me, for then my ſecond death will be far worſe than my firſt In this

ſenſe

sense the Septuagint read the words, Διὰ τί οὐκ ἐποίησας λήθην τῆς ἀνομίας μου &c. *Why forgettest not thou my transgression? Jer.* 31. 34. The Lord is pleased to paraphrase his own meaning: *For I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more.* Some read the words thus, Why dost thou not spare or indulge my transgression, and cause my iniquity to pass by? לא תשא, *non tolles, non parcis?* והעניר *pertransire facies? My transgressions*, which denote the extravagant and irregular motions of my Soul, which have exceeded the bounds, and removed the Land-marks or limits, which thy Law hath set and prescribed, and which the Lord hath commanded me not to pass, lest I die. Thou hast said to the passions and affections of my Soul, those proud and rampant Waves, *Hitherto shall ye go, and no further.* But they have defied that confinement. Those Waters of *Mara*, like more innocent Liquors, *difficile suo continentur termino*, will not be kept in. Thus St. *Ambrose* in his Book *de Paradiso* describes it. *Peccatum est divinæ Legis prævaricatio* [*My iniquity*] That is, an oblique thing which swerves from that measure, that Rule of Righteousness, which thou hast left me as the standard of my actions. *Dictum, factum, concupitum*

Arias Montan.

Aug. contra Faust. lib. 22. cap. 27.

concupitum contra Legem Æternam eſt peccatum. I was framed regularly, but my nature now is become a warpt, a crooked piece, *ſed nunquam rectum, tortile lignum?* Shall my crooked paths never be made ſtraight? For this I bow the knee before the Throne of Grace, that thou wouldeſt pardon my tranſgreſſion, and take away mine iniquity, *&c.*

2. His plea for a ſpeedy return of mercy, [For now I ſhall ſleep in the duſt.] He grew heavy and he began to fold his hands to the ſleep of death, being thus made unready, or ready rather to lye down in the bed of the grave, his deſire was that it might be eaſy before he went to it. I ſee my ſun (as if he had ſaid) now declining, and therefore why are not theſe thick clouds ſcattered, which are ſo big with that ſtorm the Pſalmiſt ſpeaks of, *viz.* of fire and brimſtone, ſnares and an horrible tempeſt? My candle is ready to be put out, oh quench thoſe ſmoaking firebrands, which elſe will enkindle that fire which never will go out. And it muſt be done now or never. For if mine eyes be once cloſed they will never be again opened to behold thy face in glory. There is that lethargick, that deadly Quality in it that thoſe who are once ſurprized with it, awake no more for ever. Thoſe who lye down

Pſal. 11. 6.

down in this bed never riſe again; *Semel mortuus ſemper mortuus.* The Sun 'tis true ſets in the evening, but he that rejoiceth as a ſtrong man to run his race, ſoon plucks thoſe Chains and Fetters of darkneſs in ſunder, (as St. *Peter* ſhook off his in the priſon:) Tranſlating it ſelf into glorious light and liberty again. But if we once deſcend into the pit of the grave, we are entred into the regions of death, and under that Shadow who can live? If the duſt thereof be once caſt upon our eyes, they are cloſed for ever, they which ſleep here wake no more. For there was never any (our Saviour only excepted) that had power to lay down his life, and to reaſſume or take it up again. [Now I ſhall ſleep.] That is, the ſleep of death. [In the duſt] that is, in the grave; ſo are both theſe expreſſions uſed by the Prophet, *Dan.* 12. 2. And many of them which ſleep in the duſt of the earth, ſhall awake, ſome to everlaſting life, and ſome to ſhame, and everlaſting contempt. So ſleep is interpreted, 1 *Cor.* 15. 20. *Chriſt is become the Firſt-fruits of them that ſlept*, that is who are dead. 52 *for the Trumpet ſhall ſound, and the dead ſhall be raiſed.* 1 Theſ. 4. 16. *The Lord himſelf ſhall deſcend with a Shout, with the voice of the Archangel, and with the trump of God, and they in Chriſt ſhall riſe firſt.* This ſhout,

the

the voice of the Arch-angel, this trump of God, are ſufficient to awake thoſe who are in their dead ſleep, that ſleep in the duſt, as the Prophet *Daniel* phraſeth it, pouring out ſuch ſhame and contempt upon ſome, that they will rather chooſe to have the rocks and mountains fall upon them, and cover them, than to appear before the lamb of God, that Lion of the Tribe of *Judah*, who will tear them in pieces and there ſhall be none to deliver, whilſt the heads of others are with joy lift up out of the duſt for their eternal redemption draws nigh. [*Thou ſhalt ſeek me in the morning but I ſhall not be.*] The night watch is like to prevent me. This night my Soul is like to be required of me; death is ready to lay his Action upon me, and then I ſhall be caſt into the Priſon of the Grave, from whence I cannot be bailed: If the ſnares of death lay hold upon me, I ſhall be ſeized and carried into the Land of forgetfulneſs, where I ſhall be remembred no more, ואינני *& non ego*, and not I, that is, I ſhall not live, but die; I ſhall not be, that is, a ſubject capable of that mercy I now beg for; for, as Death leaves me, Judgment will find me. If my breath be once ſtopt, I can never more pant after God, tho' I be in a Land where no Water is; that if

ואינני. *Et non ego.*

Lazarus

Lazarus were sent, he'd not find where to dip the tip of his Finger.

So that these words seem but a further enforcement of the former Argument and Plea to hasten mercy; and that the Wheels of his Chariot might not stay too long, but that it might prevent the morning Watch [For if I be then sought for, I shall not be found.] And therefore he begs that the Lord would seal his pardon before death does execution upon him.

The fruit which grows upon this Branch of the Tree of Life, is this; *viz.*

Doct. *That the pardon of sin is a thing highly desirable of the* Lord; *but more especially when we have a view and prospect of approaching death.*

'Tis a Pearl of that transcendent value, that the wise Merchant-man who trafficks Heaven-ward, would purchase at any rate. Indeed, what would not a man give in exchange for his Soul? *Quis desiderio sit pudor, aut modus tam chari capitis?* Should the Lord take the sinner by the throat, (who hath incurred a debt he can never discharge) and say to him, Pay me that thou owest me, I will no longer forbear, I cannot, I will not wait

wait upon man-kind, becauſe he is but fleſh: What will that poor Soul do? what can it plead? 'Tis in vain to ſay, Have patience with me, and I will pay thee all. Alas! could we give him thouſands of Rams, or ten thouſand Rivers of Oyl, they would not ſlake, they may enflame the reckoning; ſhould we give the fruit of our Bodies for the ſin of our Souls; with ſuch Sacrifices God is not well pleaſed. In ſhort, to make ſatisfaction is impoſſible: To lie and languiſh to eternity, to live with the Worm which never dies, and for ever fry in thoſe flames that never go out, is intolerable. Oh! what Tongue can tell, or Heart conceive, how welcom a diſcharge would be to this unſolvend Bankrupt ſinner, to have his Obligation cancelled, Juſtice ſatisfied, his Perſon freed and manumized from that hank and hold the Law hath upon him?

Firſt, We ſhall conſider the pardon of ſin abſolutely, and ſo 'tis a thing highly deſirable.

Secondly, Relatively to our latter end, when we are upon the brink of the Grave, and verge of Eternity. This puts a μάλλιστα upon it, an edge and emphaſis upon the mind of man, with the greater earneſtneſs to long for him, that rides triumphantly in the Chariot

riot of the Gospel, and think his wheels move slowly, if with *Jehu* he drives not furiously to bring salvation.

First, Absolutely, and in it self considered, 'tis a thing highly desirable.

1. If we examine the nature of it, and what Pardon is.

2. The method God useth, and by what means he is pleased to convey it.

3. The advantages of it, those profits and perquisites upon which it is recommended.

Q. 1. *What is the nature of this pardon and forgiveness?*

R. To understand which, it will not a little avail, to consider that obligation and guilt which we have universally contracted, therebeing nothing that can better recommend the being translated into the glorious light and liberty of the Children of God, than to take a prospect of those Chains and Fetters of Darkness, with which we are intangled. If we cast an eye upon that dreadful precipice on which we stand, how welcom would that hand be, that plucks us from the brink of it! Severe and dreadful is that wrath of God, which is revealed against the Children of Disobedience; the breach which the sinner hath made in the Divine Law, hath exposed him to the vengeance of eternal fire, *Jud.* 7.

The

The becoming Bankrupt of that Stock and Talents God at firſt entruſted to our management and care, have involved us in a debt we can never ſatisfie, and to be caſt alive into that Lake of fire which burneth with Brimſtone (as the Scripture affirms) till our Creditor be paid the utmoſt farthing, is ſo hard a ſaying, that none can bear it. Now this is the ſinner's caſe; the flaming Sword which defended the Tree of Life in Paradice, hangs always over his head; yea the ſtone of ſtumbling is ready every moment to fall down upon him and grind him to powder: Death is the only wages he earns by ſin; that's the Wolf which lies at his door, the Lion and Bear by the way, that is ready to tear him in pieces: Theſe are thoſe Beaſts of prey to whoſe mercy he ſtands expoſed, which he'll find to be but cruelty, *Matth.* 5. 22. Such a perſon is ſaid to be in danger of Hell fire, ἔνοχος ἔσται εἰς τὴν γέενναν πυρός. *Mark* 3. 29. ἔνοχός ἐστιν αἰωνίου κρίσεως, he is in danger of eternal damnation [*Being in danger*] ſeems too ſcant an expreſſion of this word ἔνοχος, for that it hath a more full and preſſing ſenſe in it, being of the ſame import with ὑπόδικος, ὑποχρεώστης, which ſignifie one that is a Debtor ſubject and obliged to endure it; *viz.* eternal damnation. According

to this sense St. *Cyril* expounds the word, by *obnoxius reus obligatus.* This the old Translation interprets *reus erit judicio.* So the Poet, *Constituam ante aras voti reus.* *Virgil.*

In this anxious and guilty state stands the trembling sinner, shaking in, and at the noise of his own Harness, frighted (as they say *Actæon* was) at the apprehension of his deformity, taking his very shadow for one armed to destroy him, and fearing with *Cain*, that every one who meets him will slay him. Nor is he more wan at his own wickedness, than he is appaled at God's Justice, like him the Poet mentions,

—Sanguisq; reliquit
Corpus, & attonitos subitus tremor occupat artus.

And no wonder when he remains insolvend under so great a Debt, which 'tis impossible for him to discharge, to be just with God, or to answer him one of a thousand, if he should contend with him. Job 9. 2, 3. *If I justifie my self*, saith *Job*, *mine own mouth will condemn me*; *If I say, I am perfect, it will prove me perverse.* So that there needs no other inquest than what the Conscience impannels, nor plainer evidence than the Testimonies it brings in against him, it being equivalent to a thousand Witnesses, Verse 10.

which

which muſt needs cauſe the matter to be taken *pro confeſſo*, whilſt he ſtands mute under ſo plain and plentiful a proof, his mouth is ſtopt before that dreadful Bar, where the caſe is not more plain, than the ſentence ſad and fatal to the ſinner; which whoſoever hears, it will make his ears to tingle. You may find it in the Goſpel, *Matth.* 25. 41. *Depart from me you accurſed, into everlaſting fire, prepared for the Devil and his Angels.* And can there be any thing ſo ſad as ſuch a baniſhment? *viz.* to be puniſhed with everlaſting deſtruction from the preſence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power, 2 *Theſ.* 1. 9. Here's that puniſhment of loſs, which 'tis impoſſible to account or eſtimate; that puniſhment of ſenſe which is ſo exquiſite, that eye hath not ſeen, nor ear heard, neither hath it entred into the heart of man to conceive the extremity of it. Here's a Pillar, which on one ſide is nothing but Clouds, in which the Lord wraps himſelf, and eclipſes the light of his Countenance, though his favour be better than life. And if the Brethren wept, becauſe they ſhould ſee the face of *Paul* no more, what weeping, what gnaſhing of teeth muſt it needs occaſion, never, never to behold the face of God in Glory? The other ſide of the Pillar is nothing but fire, which will be the

portion of their Cup, who have drunk down iniquity like water, and denotes the punishment of sense, which is of that accurate and unconceivable nature, that no tongue can tell it; No pen describe it. Should we take a book and with the prophet write it both within and without, with lamentation, mourning and woe, something might be said, yet 'tis impossible to tell the thousandth part of that misery and sorrow wherewith the Lord afflicts the unpardoned sinner in the day of his fierce wrath; From these two quivers doth the Almighty shoot his arrows, the poyson whereof would drink up our Spirits to consider. But how would it swallow us up to taste the venom, to experiment or feel the vengeance of them, which if laid in the ballance, will be found of an exceeding and eternal weight. The treasures of wrath which the sinner heaps up to himself are never to be exhausted, the tide of this overflowing scourge will never Ebb, never will his scorching sun set. The time of his visitation, will be days without number, and of the Kingdom of darkness there shall be no end. He shall be like *Melchizedeck* without Father, without Mother, having neither beginning of days nor end of life, or death rather. 'Tis the portion of his Cup of wrath to have neither

bounds

bounds nor bottom. To be tormented and to have no reſt day nor night for ever. And thus to inhabit eternity will be thy future State, Oh thou unpardon'd ſinner. And as thy way will be long, ſo thy burthen will be heavy. Καθ' ὑπερβολὴν εἰς ὑπερβολὴν Βάρος, an exceeding as well as an eternal weight, a load that will cruſh thee into nothing, or 'twere happy for thee if it would, for *præſtat non eſſe quàm tam miſerum eſſe.* But now they muſt be, that they may be miſerable, and ever live, that they may alwaies die. They are Veſſels of wrath fitted by their own hands for deſtruction; And now they ſhall be tunned out of the Vials of Gods indignation to the brim, nay their meaſure ſhall be ſuch, that their cup ſhall run over. What now would that Soul give to taſt of the waters of life who is ſcorched with the ſenſe of theſe ſorrows? How welcom would a pardon be to thoſe who are condemned to this fiery furnace? With what entertainment would a Writ of Eaſe from thoſe endleſs torments, be received; a pardon granted upon the terms of the Goſpel, and ſealed with the blood of Chriſt? Rev. 14. 16.

Q. *But if any ſhall ask what this pardon is, or what influence it hath upon a guilty perſon?*

Remissio peccatorum est propositum in Deo non puniendi peccata fidelium propter satisfactionem Christi.

R. I answer that [Pardon and forgiveness is the grace of God by which he accepts the person, and remits the iniquities of the offender for the sake of Christ.] We that were afar off are made nigh by the blood of Christ, *Eph.* 2. 13. He breaks down the partition Wall that separated him and the Soul from each other, saying in a better sense than ever meant it,

Invide dicebat paries, quid amantibus obstas?

Isa. 43. 25. *I, even I am he that blotteth out thy transgressions, for mine own sake, and will not remember thy sins.* This act of oblivion is an act of indemnity and pardon. With the pen of a ready writer he blots out the hand writing of Ordinances, quits the scores which the sinner hath contracted. So that now there is no Condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus, *Rom.* 8. 1. For there's none that can lay any thing to the charge of God's Elect; such is the nature of pardon, that it speaks us reconciled unto God by the death of his Son, making peace through the blood of his Cross. *Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation*

Having forgiven you all trespasses, blotting out the hand-writing of ordinances, that was against us, Col. 2. 13, 14.

1 Joh. 4. 10. *And ſent his Son to be the propitiation for our ſins.*

on through faith in his blood, Rom. 3. 25. To be thus acquitted, thus reconciled, and reinſtated in the favour of God is to be pardoned. The producing a pardon thus ſigned, thus ſealed by the blood of Chriſt our Saviour, is a ſufficient plea to quaſh any Indictment; Hereby it confeſſeth and avoideth the higheſt impeachment, Juſtice can draw up againſt it. To be ſure the aſpect of ſin is dreadful, and when ever it looks upon the Soul, it may well make it cry out, Turn away thine eyes from me, for they have overcome me. It never taſts of its own guilt, and curſe of the Law to which it is obnoxious, but 'tis like the Wormwood and the Gall to it, or like the Prophet's pot, which had nothing but death in it. But pardon is that meal (made ſure of the fineſt of the wheat) which expels the poiſonous guilt of ſin, and defends it from that venom and contagion, which muſt otherwiſe prove fatal and deſtructive to it. The Prophet *Iſaiah* judged it of that worth, that he thought nothing of a more valuable conſideration with a ſinner to commute for his ſin, and buy him off from that which he accounts his moſt gainful trade, *Iſa.* 54. 7. *Let the wicked man forſake his way and the unrighteous man his thoughts, and let him turn unto the Lord, and*

and he will have mercy, and to our God, and he will abundantly pardon. And can there be any thing more desirable to a sinner than when he hath dasht the bark of his innocency in pieces against sin, that Rock of offence; when he lyes labouring for life in the Sea of divine wrath, and ready to be swallowed up by those mighty waters, then to have post *naufragium tabulam*, a plank thrown out, by which he arrives in that good land, which is spiritually called *Canaan*? When *David* had fallen upon this stone of stumbling, he wounded himself, broke his bones, which made him roar in the night by reason of the disquietness of his Soul, and water his couch with his tears; with what Spiritual passion did he beg for this balm of *Gilead*, that emollient, appeasing Oyl which came out of the horn of Salvation? *Psal.* 51. 1, *Have mercy on me according to thy loving kindness, according to the multitude of thy tender mercy blot out my transgressions,* 9. v. *Hide thy face from my sins, blot out all mine iniquities.* For this he longed, for this he fervently prayed, and the Lord caused his fervent prayer to become effectual, 2 *Sam.* 12. 13. *And* David *said unto* Nathan, *I have sinned against the* Lord. *And* Nathan *said unto* David, *The Lord also hath put away thy sin, thou shalt not die.* This is the hand which plucks in pieces

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the bands of ſin, and caſts away thoſe cords of intanglement from us, behind our backs; it breaks in ſunder the fetters of darkneſs; it ſweetens the gall of bitterneſs. Now the ſinner who wiſht for the Rocks and Mountains to fall upon him, (though they'd ſcarce cover him from the wrath of the Lamb) can with comfort & confidence appear before the Lord, as knowing, that pardoning mercy hath wip't off his ſcore, and cancelled that obligation by which he ſtood indebted more than ten thouſand Talents, to him who is the Judge of all the Earth.

2. 'Tis not only deſirous in it ſelf, but alſo upon the account of that means and method by which 'tis conveyed; God requires not the fruit of thy body for the ſin of thy ſoul; He ſaith not as the men of *Jabeſh-Gilead* to the *Iſraelites*, You muſt every one of you put out your right eye, or there can be no pacification; no, the fountain head from whence this ſtream of living water flows, is [his meer good pleaſure;] *Fear not little flock, 'tis your Father's good will to give you the* pardon of your ſin, and to admit you as *recti in curiâ*; from this root alone does this pleaſant plant ſpring, *Iſa.* 43. 25. *I, even I am he that blotteth out thy tranſgreſſion for my*

1 Sam. 11. 2.

1. God's good pleaſure.

my own ſake, and will not remember thy ſin. The argument of his love is drawn from himſelf: And as 'tis ſaid of the Silk-worm, ſhe ſpins her web out of her ſelf, ſo are the garments of our righteouſneſs woven out of the very bowels of his compaſſions. The Poet tells us, that in the primitive Age of the world, the Earth never expected any thing from the Seeds-man, but of a free and generous bounty ſupplied its Inhabitants *gratis*.

Sponte ſuâ nati ſine ſemine flores.

I am ſure we may aſſert the ſame thing concerning this precious fruit, pardon and forgiveneſs in the Text, which grows not up from any ſeed of our own ſowing, but only pullulates and ſprings up from the root of Divine Goodneſs; it only grows out of the ſtem of free grace. Some things move by the force and impulſe of extrinſick Agents; but the Almighty in this ſenſe may be truly called αὐτοκίνητον, the firſt, the only cauſe of his own Motion. 'Tis true, we muſt ſay, Without controverſie great is the myſtery of Salvation, if we conſider the rules and meaſures of its management; How Juſtice and Mercy joyn hand in hand together, to let the repenting ſinner go unpuniſhed; How theſe two wheels ſhould move upon the ſame Axletree, is an intricate ſpeculation, that the

ſword

ſword ſhould be melted, and yet the ſcabbard go untoucht, that ſin (the Dart which hath pierced us to the heart) ſhould be deſtroyed and melted down, whilſt the Soul, in which it was unhappily ſheathed and ſhrouded, ſhould not have an hair of its head ſinged, nor the leaſt ſmell of burning about it; this is marvelous in our eyes. The Buſh burnt, but God would not ſuffer it to be conſumed. The two Natures in the Perſon of our Mediator, which were united for this end, I mean our redemption from the guilt and puniſhment of ſin, was very myſterious; They were like the Prophet's wheel within a wheel, which although we may not underſtand in all the movements, turnings and windings of it, yet this we know aſſuredly, that a ſpirit of love and pity, is that Intelligence and Principle by which they moved towards this great end; *viz.* our ſalvation; which appears by the immutable and eternal Counſel of God, and contrivance of our great Maſter-builder, who not only laid the very foundation in love, but hath alſo cemented the ſuperſtructure, with no leſs grace, which is engraven on every ſide of the walls thereof, in ſuch legible characters, that he which runs may read them.

God ſo loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, &c. John 3. 16.

2. I mean [the satisfaction of our Saviour.] If love laid the corner-stone, this added the top-stone; which is another part of that method by which this pardon and forgiveness is conveyed to the offender. By this means it becomes, 1. An easie; 2. A sure Purchase.

It is finished, John 19. 30.

1. Easie; for he that is the way it self prepares it, and straightens all thy crooked paths: Salvation is come to thy house, and thy Redeemer stands at the door; if thou wilt step over the threshold of thy heart, he will come in and sup with thee, or rather thou with him, who furnishes thy Table for thee in the Wilderness, by which he shews thee what he can, what he will do. We need not say, Who shall ascend up on high, or dispatch an hungry *Grecian* to bring the Bread of Life from Heaven? For since our *Moses* came (yea a greater than *Moses* is here) the Manna falls round about our Tents, and 'tis no hard task to stoop and gather it. Paradise is to be gained, though we do not climb over the wall to enter it; that were a difficult, if not a desperate attempt. The King of Glory himself is that Everlasting Gate, which stands open for our admission. We need not seek Righteousness by the Law, we are under a Gospel, and more gentle Institution,

tion, by which we are injoyned indeed to buy Wine and Milk of him. But they are a good penyworth (if they be any at all) for they are ſold without money or without price. There is a glorious inheritance purchaſed for the Saints in light. But the price never came out of our own purſes with which it was bought, and paid for, for it was *Ære*, or rather *Sanguine alieno*. So St. *Peter* aſſerts it. We are bought with a price, not with corruptible things, as Silver and Gold; But with the precious blood of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt. Thus hath our Lord lightned the burthen and lined the Yoke of his Goſpel. The little finger of which might have been made heavier than the loins of the Law; But ſuch is the kindneſs of our heavenly Father to make the grace of the Goſpel gentle and eaſy to be intreated, by them that beg it. And if the way to eternal life be narrow (in this ſenſe) 'tis only to thoſe who are ſtreightned in their own Souls; For when the heart is inlarged it runs in the ways of Gods Commands, and as it runs it reads the Characters of divine compaſſion; which hath made the way ſo plain, and pleaſant, being paved with love, and ſtrewed with thoſe leaves which are ſhed from the Roſe of *Sharon*, and Lilly of the Valleys.

1 Pet. 18. 19.

leys. That things of a far leſs worth, and order are expoſed upon harder terms, and more difficulty in the attainment, no man queſtions. It coſts ſome price and pains to plant the Vineyard, and tread the Wine-preſs, before the liquor ſparkles in the Glaſs. There is a Vein for the Silver, and a Mine that affords us Gold, but nature hath laid it ſo deep, that it caſts a damp upon the Spirits, before we deſcend into that horrible pit to fetch it thence. Nor does the ranſacking thoſe bowels of the earth only pain us at the heart, but to bring it home is ſo perilous an attempt, that many times the Winds and Waves, the Shelves and Quick-Sands, Shipwrack our purpoſes, and Strand our reſolutions before we put to Sea. But as this holy Merchandiſe, the pardon of ſin is a pearl of a far greater price, ſo it lays through a calmer and more pacifick Sea. He whom *Mary* ſuppoſed to be the Gardiner hath planted the tree of life, under thine own window, and in the ſtreams of his own blood, hath quencht that flaming Sword wherewith the Cherubims defended it; ſo that we may now with eaſe and ſafety pluck of its fruit, eat and live for ever. The Lord ſaith to us, Waſh and be clean, only believe in the Lord Jeſus Chriſt, and thou ſhalt be ſaved.

2. But

2. But as this way of gaining pardon is eaſy, ſo it's ſafe and ſure alſo;

1. In its attainment.

2. In its poſſeſſion and injoyment.

1. 'Tis ſure in its attainment. *Thoſe whom thou haſt given me ſhall come unto me,* John 6. 37. *Nothing can ſeparate, from the Love of Chriſt. Whatever you ask in my Father's name ſhall be given unto you,* Joh. 16. 23. *Heaven and Earth ſhall fail before one jot or tittle of the Chriſtians hope ſhall paſs away.* Doſt thou aim at the mark of the price of the high calling? thou ſhalt not miſs it. The Lord our righteous judge will give us the Crown of glory we ſtrive for at the laſt day. Our primitive integrity in which we at firſt imbarkt, was an exact, and well built Veſſel, our wiſe and Maſter builder committed no error throughout the whole frame and fabrick of our compoſure, but though it was exact in its deſign, accurate in its contrivance, yet alas not impregnable in its defence againſt the piracy of Satan, that watchful free-booter, and malicious enemy of the Soul; but now our lading is enſured; we are built for defence, yea and defiance of hell (and devil too, though his name be *Legion*) the Gates thereof ſhall never prevail againſt thee. Nor ſhall all the power of that Prince of darkneſs, be ever a-

able to pluck the Crown from off thy Head, as 'tis now settled and established: *Victrici firmata manu.* If thou resist him he shall flee from thee, nor shall any of all the powers of darkness stand before thee. We shall be conquerours, nay ὑπερνικῶμεν, more than Conquerours, the righteous may scarcely, yet they shall be certainly saved. Mountains of difficulty we may meet with by the way, but none insuperable. The *Alpes* to *Hannibal* were but a rough, and craggy passage, yet he made a path, and travel'd over them. There's no lock can possibly exclude thee, no bolt upon the Gate of Heaven can impede thy entrance, if you will believe St. *Paul*; Shall Tribulation, or Distress, or Persecution, or Famine, or Nakedness, or Peril, or Sword? No, he was perswaded that neither death nor life, nor Angels, nor Principalities nor Powers, nor things present nor things to come, *&c.* should be able to separate from the Love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord. Let the grave shut her mouth upon thee, yet it cannot swallow thee up. Let Principalities and Powers Head and Herd against thee, yet they will prove too weak to prevail against thee, and despoil thee of that Crown and Kingdom reserved in the heavens for thee. The projectors of temporal greatness, frequently meet with

Rom. 8. 35.

with a Lyon and Bear by the way, that often tear in pieces their expectations, and deſtroy their fulleſt hopes and faireſt promiſes of ſucceſs. When with a great deal of art and contrivance, they think they have fixt and faſhioned that engine which will ſcrew them up to the greateſt height and pinacle of honour, their machine fails, falls about their ears, laying all their hopes and honour in the duſt. In that day, ſaith *Job*, all their hopes periſh, *Job* 9. With what preſumptive gaity did *Agag* come to *Samuel* to receive his Crown? but it proved a Crown of thorns: And as a Ship with her full and flying ſails in a moment Splits upon a Rock; So were his greateſt expectations daſht, which periſht with his body, that was cut in pieces by the Sword of the Prophet. When *Pompey* had the cup at his lip, and ready to drink down the univerſal Empire of the World; It was ſuddenly daſht out of his hand by *Cæſar*, when his ambitious and expenſive project lay like water ſpilt upon the ground, never to be gathered up. Thanks be to God the ſteps by which we aſcend the throne of grace are not thus ſlippery. Did the Key of *David* hang at the girdle of ſuch chance & contingency our entrance into life would be very uncertain.

Pſal. 146. 6.

In the fight at *Munda* in *Spain*.

It may happen that a man may plant a Vineyard & never eat of the fruit of it; the field may be manured, and yet yield no increaſe; the labour of the Olive may fail, the root may go up as rottenneſs, & her bloſſom as the duſt. But he who is ingrafted into the true Vine ſhall have his fruit unto holineſs, & his end ſhall be everlaſting life.

Nor can this truth be rationally queſtioned whilſt the care and conduct of this affair is in the hand of our redeemer; who can lay any thing to the charge of Gods elect? 'Tis Chriſt that died, yea rather that is riſen again. The Soul can never miſcarry, be the pangs of the new birth never ſo ſharp, which is under ſo kind and powerful aſſiſtance. Can that Veſſel come ſhort of the harbour, when he that ſteers it has the waves at his beck, and holds the winds in his Fiſt? How can that ſin ſtand upon the ſcore when he that hath the pen of a ready writer hath dipt it in his own blood, and croſt the book of accounts?

1. Does it require [Power] to reconcile to Gods favour, to reinſtate us in that happineſs we once loſt? Who knows what is the exceeding greatneſs of his power to us ward who believe, according to the working of his mighty power, *Eph.* 1. 19. *This we know he is able to ſave to the uttermoſt all that come to God by him, Heb.* 7. 25. For help is laid upon him

him that is mighty to ſave. Who as a prince hath power with God, & hath prevailed; And well he may who hath paid ſo valuable a price to redeem us. With authority may he forbid the deſtroying Angel to enter the door, whoſe poſts and lintels are beſprinkled with the blood of the Lamb, which is of that tranſcendant worth, and intrinſick value, that no man can be at a loſs what to give in expiation for his ſin, or in exchange for his Soul. Though our iniquities be as cords, and our ſin as a cart rope yet our Saviour hath ſo ſtrong an hand that he plucks all in ſunder like tow. Our Prince of peace is אֵל גִּבּוֹר, the mighty God, our Spiritual *Samſon* who took the Gates of Hell upon his back, and broke thoſe bars of Iron in ſunder. Nor could he be leſs, who diſſolved our agreement made with hell, and freed us from that league which was as ſtrong as death with whom it was concluded, From the brink of which pit nothing but a powerful hand and outſtretched arm, were able to redeem and reſcue a ſinking ſinner. Let the ſtrong man glory in his ſtrength, to be ſure a ſtronger than he is here, who bare our burthen for us, which was an exceeding and an eternal weight both of ſin & miſery. This was that low, and groveling eſtate to which the fall of man

had levell'd him, clipping the wings, yea totally depluming that bird of paradise, of its primitive and native innocency; Plucking down the nest from the tree of life, and casting down the whole brood upon the ground, till the high and mighty one raised us from beneath, and rebuilt our nest among the Stars, from whence these Children of light, these Sons of the morning were universally dropt. And though it is as difficult an attempt to fix a star in heaven, as to pluck one thence; I mean, no easy matter to reduce a lapsed, or reconcile an apostate sinner; Yet when he pleases to work, nothing can hinder: If he speaks the word, it shall come to pass. By the breath of his lips he blasts and baffles whatever can oppose. He hurls those mountains into the Sea, and takes up the Hills as a little thing, to make our way the more passable into Heaven. He laughs at the Shaking of the Spear, though it be in the hand of *Satan*, that prince of the power of the air, whom he hath so far defeated, that he hath broken his Scepter, pluckt the Crown from his head, and hath trampled upon Hell and Death, the principalities of his Kingdom, Chaining them as Triumphs and Trophies to the Chariot of his Gospel, in which he still rides conquering and to conquer, that not only the Captain of

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our Salvation himſelf, but we who fight under his Banner, may ſet our feet (as thoſe who ſerved under *Joſhua*) upon the necks of our Spiritual Enemies; ſo ſtrong is his hand, ſo high is his right hand, that the Kingdom of Satan hath ſuffered violence: Yea, ſo far hath he prevailed, that the violent may take the Kingdom of Heaven by force; to which ſenſe the words of the Pſalmiſt may be not unfitly applied. That whilſt he overwhelmed our Enemies, he hath brought us ſafely into *Canaan*, to the border of his Sanctuary, and to the Mountain which his right hand hath purchaſed.

Joſh. 10. 24.

Pſal. 78. 54.

2. Wiſdom; but Oh the [Wiſdom] of that juſt Perſon! 1 *Cor.* 1. 24. *Chriſt, the Power of God, and the Wiſdom of God*; St. *Paul* accounted him no leſs, and that he muſt be, whoſe conduct is ſo admirable, the method and meaſures by which he hath managed and maintained our Cauſe, at the Bar of him who is the Judge of all the Earth, ſo unſearchable. If any man ſin, he hath an Advocate with the Father, in whoſe hand the ſinner's Cauſe can never miſcarry; for he is the Wonderful Counſellor. When the Diſciples of our Lord took a view of thoſe ſtately Buildings in *Jeruſalem*, how were they

transported with the Art and Contrivance, the State and Magnificence of the Structure; *Master*, say they, *Behold what manner of Buildings are here!* But when we view the Temple of the Lord, which our first Parents had so far dilapidated, that we could scarce see one Stone left upon another which was not thrown down, to be repaired and raised out of the dust and rubbish in which it laid, contrived for strength so impregnable, that the Gates of Hell cannot prevail against it; for glory so incomparable, that 'tis become the very Beauty of Holiness; here's grace, grace, written upon the walls, and engraven upon the battlements of the house, which Wisdom hath built, which is so framed, that here the Christian finds Sanctuary, when it is pursued by the avenger of Blood, and hand of Justice, here it hides it self, and enters into the Chambers of it, till the indignation of the Lord be over-past.

Nor hath the Wisdom of God designed it meerly for our retreat and safety, filling it only with the glory of his Goodness, but Justice too; where as he hath erected a Mercy-seat, so hath he placed a Tabernacle for the Sun of Righteousness. How wonderful must that Web be, when the matter of it, the whoof and wharf are made up of such glorious excellencies!

cellencies! This is that exact and accurate contexture, which the wiſeſt *Arachne*, the moſt skilful *Penelope* never underſtood; no tongue can tell it, nor exacteſt hand deſcribe it; tis *ultra penicillum*,; the depth of this Wiſdom is beyond any plummet, or capacity to bound or fathom it: Only this we ſee, that theſe glorious perfections of Mercy and Juſtice, though of the moſt diſtant and different hue, are ſufficiently conſulted for. And though, like the Angels on *Jacob*'s Ladder, they paſs each other, 'tis without any juſtle by the way, yea, like the Blue and Purple in *Aaron*'s Ephod, they are ſhaded and ſhadowed to advantage. Thus hath the Son of God, who is the Wiſdom of the Father, found a temper for the Law, not in breaking the point, or putting a dint upon the edge of the Sword of Juſtice, but by interpoſing his own breaſt, and receiving that thruſt which was made againſt the ſinner, which he knew had no way to make ſatisfaction, but by an abſolute ſurrender of it ſelf, to an exquiſite and endleſs torment: our Saviour, by offering himſelf a Sacrifice, hath made a full compenſation to the former, and for ever obviated the doom and ruine of the latter; by which kind and prudent project, he hath not cut off the ſmalleſt lap of the Robe of Juſtice,

but

but ſpread the skirt of his own Garment over the ſinners nakedneſs. By this means he hath given us an undoubted right, and ſo a juſt plea for Heaven: He hath ſetled by an indefeaſable title, a glorious Inheritance upon the Saints in light; and that without the leaſt abatement of what the Law demanded, or interruption of its courſe, or Rules of proceeding in the Court of Heaven: He had too great love to the Law he had enacted, which he came not to deſtroy, but to fulfil. This Watchman of *Iſrael* had no deſign to wound it, or to take away the Veil from it, but hath pierced through it, and by the beams of his love hath ſhined upon us, who ſate deſolate for ſins ſake. How thriving a plant of righteouſneſs Man was, when he was firſt placed in Paradice, he muſt be a very great ſtranger in *Iſrael* that underſtands not, though now he is dead, pluckt up by the roots, being no better than a meer excreſcence, a ſinful and luxuriant riot. But ſince our Saviour received the Spear into his own ſide, he hath turned the Sword of Juſtice into a Pruning-hook, by which he hath fitted us for a new ingrafture into the true Vine, and implantation into the Paradice of God. He bowed the Heavens and came down among us, that we might with the greater eaſe and certainty

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ſtep into them, and for ever bow the knee before the Father of Lights.

Te propter vitamq; tuam ſum Virginis alvum Ingreſſus, ſum factus homo, atq; horrentia paſſus Funera. Lactan. de beneficiis Chriſti.

But as the tranſcendent Power and Wiſdom of our Redeemer hath aſcertained our pardon at God's hand; ſo hath he induſtriouſly contrived, that it may not be defeated at ours; there's one found who is worthy to unſeal the Fountain of the Waters of Life, that hath broken through the Gates, the Powers of Hell, and fetcht us Waters beyond the Well of *Bethlehem*; for 'tis from the Fountain, the Well of Life: Yea and careful he is too that we may not pour them out upon the ground. He hath trod the Wine-preſs of his Fathers wrath, which hath burſt out with new Wine, fit to chear the heart of the languiſhing and diſconſolate Chriſtian; yea and hath likewiſe taken care that we may have new Bottles for its reception.

'Tis true, by the prevalency of his Mediation he hath taken away the Veil, and cauſed the light of his Fathers countenance (that day-ſpring from on high) to break forth; but if we want an eye to behold his face in righteouſneſs,

teousnes,we shall never see it in glory.There's no man so wild, or weak, as to imagine he shall be happy, from a violent presumptive belief of being so, but may as easily imagine himself installed the universal Prince and Monarch of the Earth, by an extravagant freak and fancy that he is such. Had we no other Heaven or Happiness in design, than what *Epicurus* that Swine dreamt, we should hereafter wallow in no other *Eden* than that fools Paradice which *Mahomet* hath Romanc't of, yet a bare, though never so strong a confidence to gain it, would prove too weak a Stratagem to compass it, too weak an Engine to raise us to that pitch, as to throw us over the wall, and cast us into the bosom of it. Presumption may fawn upon a man, and flatter him into ruine, which is the only Paradice a fool can expect, unless fancying our selves happy would make us so, which is too faint and frivolous an argument to conclude the thing we wish.

Solomon hath long ago determined our case,*Prov.* 25. 19.Confidence in an unfaithful man in time of extremity, is like a broken Tooth,& Foot out of joynt; as if he had said, he that feeds himself with vain hopes in the day of trouble, will find himself but lean and ill-favoured, for all that fat-fancied pasture

ſture he grazes in, confidence being but a flatulent and airy thing, affording no good nutriment; or if it could, a broken Tooth is ſcarce able to feed upon the moſt inviting Meſs. A Foot out of joynt will make but a lame purſuit after happineſs, and muſt of neceſſity occaſion too great an halt, ever to overtake it. And therefore ſuch is the Wiſdom and Juſtice of our Evangelical Conſtitution, as to render the imputed goodneſs of another, the juſt and only Plea before the great Tribunal, why Sentence of Death ſhould not paſs againſt us; ſo that an inhærent goodneſs of our own muſt qualifie us to make uſe of it; for what hath he to do to take the Name of Chriſt into his mouth, who hateth to be reformed? By the firſt our welfare is the better ſecured, and our boaſting the more effectually prevented: For now, if we catch the prey, no thanks to the ſtrength of our Bow, or ſwiftneſs of our Legs; (for as *Jacob* ſaid to *Iſaac*) *the Lord hath brought it.* If we encompaſs Salvation, 'tis not to our Net that we muſt burn Incenſe, but to our Saviour, who brought ſo conſiderable a draught to it. By the latter our Induſtry will be incited, and a ſupine ſlothfulneſs totally obviated. Like *Ezekiel*'s Cherubims, we have four Wings, with twain we may cover our faces,

not

not being able to appear with them naked, open and bare, before him with whom we have to do; and with twain we must flie, if we design to enter Heaven. The Doctrine of our Faith, and Tenure of the Gospel imports no less, whatever the clamours of Enemies abroad, or of false Brethren at home, may suggest to the contrary, the Terms of our Redemption, like him that made them, being just and good, and therefore the Pearl of great price shall never be hung at the snout of that Swine which wallows in the mire. *Isa.* 55. 7. *If the unrighteous man will forsake his thoughts, and the wicked man his way, and return to the Lord, he will have mercy, and to our God, and he will abundantly pardon.*

They of *Rome* may charge us with promising Heaven upon easie terms, but they are no easier, nor other, than what God himself hath prescribed, and so admit of no imputation of blame upon any account whatever. But if to obtain Salvation upon easie terms, is a Faith not to be admitted, the Doctrine of those who reprove us must go hardly down: If the Decree of Pope *Sixtus* be of any reputation; *viz.* that a Chaplet of Prayers to the Virgin *Mary* should rescue a man from a thousand Devils. But whatever the malice of our implacable Enemies may object

object againſt our Church or Doctrine, yet this is our Faith, That no unclean thing ſhall enter into Heaven; he purgeth every plant before he ingrafts it into the Tree of Life. This Purgatory we believe, and yet are ſure that he who * believes ſhall be ſaved; a Doctrine which is no way licentious, nor infringes the leaſt Hem of the Garment, or Robe of Righteouſneſs. He that took ſo much care to ſtand in the gap, and make up that breach and battery which ſin had occaſioned in that Divine Law, which the Father had ſet as a bank and boundary of our obedience, was not like to purchaſe (and at ſo dear a rate too) an univerſal liberty to tranſgreſs at pleaſure, and generally lay waſte the Vineyard which the Lord hath planted: This were the way to make Religion *felo de ſe*, deſtructive of it ſelf; like the Manna in the Wilderneſs, breed that Worm which frets out the very heart and bowels of it. This were to make Grace degenerate into the higheſt wantonneſs, our Evangelical Liberty into the moſt unbounded riot and licentiouſneſs; it annihilates Virtue, by taking away the Precepts which enjoyn it; yea and cauſeth tranſgreſſion too to ſhrink and wither into

* Μία καθολικὴ τῶν ἀνθρώπων σωτηρία ἡ πίστις. *Una & univerſalis generis humani ſalus eſt fides.* Clem. Alex. Pædag. lib. 1. cap. 16.

into nothing, by plucking up the Law it self by the Roots, from whence the evil of its Nature hath accidentally sprung and budded, yea blossomed and brought forth bitter Almonds. Whoever takes this aim, will certainly miss the mark of the price of their High Calling. For it can be no way compatible with the Wisdom and Goodness of him that saved us, to project a way for the Establishing of Spiritual, which is utterly incongruous, yea inconsistent with civil Peace, and common Tranquillity. The fat of Rams was formerly accounted but a lean Oblation in comparison of Obedience; nor can a dead Faith (though under a Gospel Constitution) be deemed a living Sacrifice. Where-ever that Heathen dipt his Pen, I know not, but I am sure what dropt from it was good Divinity, not unworthy his Prince to whom he spake, and the only way to crown him with Glory and Immortality. His words are these, ἡγοῦ ὃ τοῦτο εἶναι δοῦμα κάλλιστον καὶ θεραπείαν μεγίστω ἐαν ὡς βέλτιστον καὶ δικαιότατον σεαυτὸν παρέχῃς. Indeed Goodness, Truth and Justice were his chief and best *Regalia*; nor was *Solomon* in all his glory comparable to himself, as when he was deckt with Judgment.

Where there's no Law, there's no Transgression.

Isocr. ad Nicoclem, 36.

ment. Nay the ſame Author tells us that theſe qualifications are far more obliging to thoſe Deities they ſerve, than all the Sacrifices they could offer, that a juſt and good man was more likely to return with an anſwer to his prayer than he which ſhould offer an Hecatomb which had Horns and Hoofs. Had faith been ſuch an empty thing, as only to puff us up with the Expectation of happineſs without any qualifications in order to it, or diſpoſitions to fit us for its injoyment, we could never have expected that ſuch a building ſhould be other than a Caſtle in the air, a preſumptive hope, having no ſupport or foundation upon which its built.

Μᾶλλον γὰρ ἔλπις τὰς τοιάδας, ἢ τὰς ἱερεῖα πόλλα καταβάλλοντας, πράξειν τὶ παρὰ τῶν Θεῶν ἀγαθόν. *Ibid.*

But ſuch is the nature of that precious faith whereby we are ſaved, that it may be as eaſily diveſted of it ſelf as of that fruit, (*viz.* Good works) which is as connate with it, and natural to it, as light to the Sun. 'Tis not like the Moon, only a ſhining, but a burning light too; rendring all its proſelytes and profeſſors not only a peculiar people, but alſo zealous of good works. Thus hath the wiſdom of our ſpiritual Phyſician, aſcertained the cure, not by palliating remedies, and healing the hurt of the Daughter of his people

slightly, but by the exactest method of purging out those noxious and sinful humours, whereby he hath restored perpetual health, yea everlasting life to the Soul, which that obstinate distemper and primitive surfeit had put in eminent hazard. Had the balm of *Gilead* only been an Anodyne, barely to smother the pain, and correct the Symptom of our disease, we might have had sufficient reason not only to have doubted the manner, but certainty of the cure; For whilst the root of evil remains, (that stump in the earth) every fresh temptation will supply it with that sap, and prove so kind or rather unkind an influence to us, as it will be apt to pullulate and spring up afresh with those briers and thorns, which will prove goads in our side, yea mortally wounding the Soul under the fifth rib. Against these by-blows he that is our Shield is an unquestionable defence; Nor will he that maintains our lot expose us to the mercy, (that is, the uncertainty) of chance. The working out of our Salvation, the suing out of our pardon is no game at hazard, he that sows to the Spirit, shall undoubtedly return with a crop, and bring his Sheaves with him. And what more inviting argument can be engraven upon the front of any undertaking than assurance of success. Who would scru-

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ple to embark in that Veſſel, which no accident can ſtrand or ſhipwrack? 'Twill be every ones choice to liſt under that Captain, who aſcertains all that engage in his quarrel to return with triumph, and ſo far aſſures a victorious event, as he cauſeth the weakeſt of his Souldiers to laugh at the ſhaking of the Spear, to baffle the force and trample on the ſtiffeſt necks of their proudeſt enemies.

Thus is the pardon of ſin recommended to our endeavours by the certainty of the attainment, which muſt needs be as the Honey or the Honey-comb, ſweet to the taſt, and obliging to the niceſt palate. Never any carefully ſought it with tears, but found it. Never any knockt at the door of mercy, but that everlaſting Gate flew open. This makes the Vineyard of the Lord of hoſts ſo delightful, as being planted with the choiceſt Vines which never fail to anſwer with the moſt luſcious Cluſters, the care and pains of thoſe that have wrought in it. The words of the wiſe man are not in this caſe impertinent. He ſhall be ſure to roaſt what he hath purſued in hunting, *Prov.* 12. 27.

2. ['Tis as ſure in the injoyment] as 'tis certain in the attainment. If thy Patent, thy Pardon be once ſealed, it can never be cancel-

led. If the Lord hath once lifted thy name in the Saints roll, there's none dare, or can expunge it out of the book of life. If the King of heaven hath pleased to indemnify thee, there's no future indictment can be brought in against thee. *Who can lay any thing to the charge of God's elect? 'tis God that justifies, who is he that condemneth? it is Christ that died, Rom.* 8. 33. This Cord of love is stronger than death, yea neither life nor death can dissolve it; The knot that is here tyed, is more inviolable than that *Alexander* cut in sunder. I may well say with the Poet.

The Gordian Knot.

Fœlices ter & amplius, quos irrupta hæc tenet copula.

God hath exalted his Son to be a Prince and a Saviour, to give repentance to *Israel*, and forgiveness of sin, which is a jewel that no man can take from him. The Poets tell us of *Æolus*, that he was so dear to the Gods, that they built his Palace in an Island surrounded with rocks defended with Walls of Brass.

Πλώτῃ ἐνι νήσῳ πᾶσαν δὲ τέ μιν πέρι τείχος
χάλκεον ἄῤῥηκτον λιαὶ δ' ἀναδέδρομε πέτρη.
Hom. Odyss. lib. 10.

The

The Habitation of the Saints is graven out of a ſtronger rock, *Iſa.* 22. 16. Yea ſo dear are they to their Saviour, that he hath built their houſe, founded their manſion upon the munition of Rocks, where thieves cannot break in upon them, to bereave them of their happineſs, nor to pluck their Crown from off their heads. He hath built the neſts of theſe birds among the Stars, which is above the reach of ſpiritual wickedneſs, though in the higheſt places. Now this certainty ariſeth.

1. From the unchangeable goodneſs and immutable purpoſes of the divine will.

2. From the conſtant conveyance and continual ſupplies of preventing grace.

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2 Tim. 2. 13.

Jer. 31. 3.

Iſa. 54. 8.

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he have mercy on them. The tyde and current of his affection is subject to no Ebb, it ever, it overflows the banks, and refreshes the borders upon the Christian shore. Gods purpose according to Election shall stand, there being nothing that can overturn or shake that Pillar, as the Earth-quake did *Simeon*'s whilst the nature of it is like *Jachin* and *Boaz*, Stability and Strength. The Poet tells us that *Circe* stood in amaze to see that nothing could work any change or alteration in *Ulysses*.

Σοὶ δέ τις ἐν φρεσὶν ἀμπλακίη(Θ). νόος ἐστίν;
Tibi vero in pectoribus immutabilis mens est?

And yet were the purposes of men the only tenure of our happiness, we should soon find it hang upon a slender thred, which often cracks, and from the highest pinacle and precipice of honour drops us into misery. I might with a Cloud of witnesses clear this truth, did not the universal suffrage, and frequent experience of men render that labour needless. Who could have thought that the rise and fall of *Haman*, should have trod like *Jobs* messengers on each others heels? But they depended upon man whose breath was in his nostrils, which blows Hot and Cold in

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a moment. There's none ſo ſlow of heart to obſerve, but muſt take notice how a cloudy and diſconſolate night ſulleys the pomp, and dinges the luſtre of the moſt ſerene day. Whereas this Sun (I mean of righteouſneſs) never deſcends ſo low as to be wholly without the ken and proſpect of faith. It's true it may be ſometimes Eclipſed and Clouded. But they are the ſinful exhalations of our own raiſing, which covers that glorious face with Clouds, which true repentance no ſooner diſſipates but we again behold the glory and light of his countenance. This Sun is not like that upon the dial of *Ahaz* it never goes backward, or like the ſhadow of it, 'tis never retrograde in his motions and affections towards his people; Like the courſe of the heavens 'tis conſtant and regular, it will abſolve its race, which as a ſtrong man it rejoyceth, and hath inviolably determined to run. *Motus cœli eſt maxime æquabilis.*

This is that Anchor of divine providence, ſo ſure and ſtedfaſt to the Soul, that it ſecures it often againſt the fear, but alwaies againſt the ſad event, of the moſt violent ſtorm. Whilſt the Soul ſits upon the Rock of ages it can ſing like an holy *Siren* the Song of *Sion*, a *requiem* to it ſelf, though troubles rage, and its enemies imagine a vain thing. Suppoſe the

worst that can befal them that are the Lords, *viz.* That their bodies, that vessel or Vehicle of their Souls should be broken with the violence of the Waves, yet in this they triumph, the inviolable purpose, and everlasting covenant that God hath made with them, that not one hair of their heads, of their better part shall perish: But shall safely arrive at that harbour which is in *Jerusalem* that is above, and seeing the exceeding, the eternal weight of its immortal Soul hangs upon this cord of love which can never be broken, ποῖά ἐστιν ἀμφιβολία; there can remain no doubt of its future happiness, and everlasting welfare. The waters must be sure which spring from such a fountain, the leaf can never wither, that fruit can never fail when Christ is the root that bears it, the stock that produceth it.

2. [*From the constant conveyances and continual supplies of divine grace*] which keeps the Soul alwaies in a pardonable condition and salvable Estate, purifying its Vessel that it may be ever a fit receptacle for this new Wine. And this is done by a constant ebullition and springing forth of grace from the fountain of living waters. 'Tis true as the temple of the Lord, (whose temple ye are) is built upon a tried foundation which can never

ver ſink, ſo is there a providential hand that keeps it in a conſtant repair, defending it from that dilapidation and decay, thoſe axes and hammers, by which *Satan* would down with it, down with it even to the ground, and would deſtroy it in leſs than three days, if the eye of providence did not tell, obſerve the towers, and mark well the battlements of it. This is that χρύσεον ὄμμα which is alwaies upon the righteous, by which he inſpirits them with that conſtant valour, and vigour, whereby they are enabled to withſtand in the evil day, and when they have done all to ſtand, *Eph.* 6. 13. Whilſt we conſider our Veſſels are but Ciſterns, ſcant and narrow receptacles of a crackt and crazy metal, we may well fear that our ſhallow cruiſe will be ſoon exhauſted, our little meal preſently expended. *Sed non videmus illud quod à tergo eſt.* There are thoſe conduits and conveyances of divine goodneſs which will for ever maintain the lot of our inheritance. Our treaſures of grace having, as the Spaniſh Embaſſador boaſted of his maſters, a root at the bottom. So that we are aſſured of our Salvation by the communication, and ſupply of the Spirit of the Lord Jeſus, *Phil* 1. 19. A Chriſtian needs never fear it ſhall ever decay and pine away, grow lean, or ill favoured,

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which is nurst at so fair, and full a breast of consolation, as it ever sucks at. How can thy grace wither, thy beauty fade, when thou hast that well of water springing up in thee to everlasting life? Yea out of thy belly shall flow those living streams which will refresh thy garden of herbs, thy graces which his own right hand hath planted. You are the new *Jerusalem* the City of God, which by the word of faith, which we preach, he hath built up for the glory of his name, and honour of his majesty, which all the powers and principalities of *Satan* can never sack or rifle; 'Tis founded upon that rock that hell cannot undermine. And for the Walls of it, they reach up to Heaven; so that 'tis impossible for the Prince of the power of the air to storm it. Nay the heavens do bow themselves and come down to help thee, under the Shady wings of whose Providence, and preventing grace, the Christian is not sheltred and shrouded, but continually nurst and brooded, from whose supernatural heat and influence, the drooping Soul finds constant reinforcements his faint and sick feathers are here stiffned and restored, by which he shall be enabled to mount up as with the wings of an Eagle, he shall run and not be weary, he shall walk and never faint.

Thus

Thus does our great Phyſician by daily Prophylactick Remedies,& preventing Grace keep the Soul in health, by which he prevents thoſe relapſes into ſin, which are moſt fatal and dangerous; not only evacuating thoſe ſinful humours, of which ſo many diſtempers (which prove both the preſages and cauſes of eternal death) are generated; but ſo altering the digeſtion and concoctive faculties of the Soul, as to prevent them for the future, by which the ſtate and temper, the form and complexion of a Chriſtian is to that degree reſtored, that it becomes beautiful and obliging in the eye and ſight of its Beloved; in whoſe eſteem and value 'tis the faireſt among ten thouſand. So much kinder is the Lord to us, than we are to our ſelves, who not only takes care to effect the firſt work of Converſion, but by a continued act of love preſerves and qualifies us for a future and further communication of pardon and forgiveneſs. Whilſt we many times by the terrours of the Law may be perſwaded to cut off one luxuriant branch, we often leave the ſtem in the heart, from whence does ariſe and ſpring freſher and more luxuriant riots. In a good Fit, being diligent to work at the Pump, but never ſtop the leak, through which theſe bitter Waters are continually

tinually supplied. By this means does the Lord secure our Lading, when 'tis once shipt; and by the constant conduct and management of his Holy Spirit does he steer us to Heaven, & lodge us safely in that Harbour for which we are bound. Nor can it be otherwise, when our Lading comes out of his own Storehouse: So that the Grace he gives us, is but a further recommend to his favour: The Wine he puts into our Bottles, sweetning and capacitating them for a greater receipt. The pardon he signs to us, being an effectual Remedy against a future Apostacy; I will speak peace to them, and they shall never more return to folly, *Psal.* 85. 8. which doth include and involve those constant supplies of assisting Grace, which prevent and hinder our return into *Egypt*, or looking back to *Sodom*, *animo revertendi*. The promise which our Saviour gave to supply the want of his personal presence, was to send the Spirit of Truth, which should lead us into all Truth, an Office which is doubly preventive of a sinful Relapse.

Dona sua coronat. Aquin.

John 15. 26. John 14. 16.

Support. 1. Leading includes comfort and support, which so far facilitates the way, and encourages us in our passage, that it makes Repen-

Repentance a thing not to be repented of. This Manna prevents their lingrings after the *Egyptian* Fleſh-pots, this *Viaticum* ſo ſtrengthens them, that they neither deſire either to ſit down or return. The Spouſe needs not fear that her feeble knees will buckle under her, whilſt ſhe leans thus upon her Beloved, and is led by the power of another when her own fails. The Angel of the New Covenant not only ſtirs the Waters, but lets us down to be healed, ſo that none can repent of their coming to the Pool. By this means not only the end of our Journey, the future event of our Labours is aſcertained, but the preſent difficulties ſweetned. So that we may trample upon the Waves which threaten to drown us, whilſt ſo kind an hand as our Saviours is ſtretched out to prevent and ſave us. When God was with *Moſes*'s mouth, the Tongue of that Stammerer was as the Pen of a Ready Writer. Who then would not wiſh to be led by that hand which will not ſuffer the dependants ever to ſtumble, or ſo to falter, as to fall into perdition? Who would not ſue for ſuch a pardon, as not only forgives the guilt of our Rebellion, but cures it? So powerful, ſo effectual are the Influences of the Spirit we are led or ſuſtained by.

2. But

Guidance. 2. But as leading implies ſupport, (thus is that perſon led whoſe feeble knees and ankle-bones have not received ſtrength ſufficient to bear the weight of the body) ſo leading intends guidance and manuduction, to prevent our miſcarriage. By the firſt he furniſhes us with proviſion that we faint not by the way; by this latter he puts on board that Compaſs by which we may infallibly ſteer to the New *Jeruſalem*; the Sun of Righteouſneſs hath light as well as heat, by which our feet are kept in the way of peace: And, though he lets the wickedneſs of the wicked come to an end, yet he guides the juſt, and keeps them in the way of Righteouſneſs for his Names ſake; the Beams of which morning Star are not only powerful to cauſe the day-ſpring from on high to break in upon the Soul in its firſt Converſion, ſcattering thoſe miſts, and diſſipating thoſe clouds with which it was benighted, but makes ſo conſtant and glorious a day, that whoever walks in it needs not either to ſtumble or ſtray. Indeed we cannot, unleſs we ſhut our eyes, or turn our backs upon it, there being that powerful Conviction attending the evidence and demonſtration of the Spirit, that makes us a willing people in the day of his power; ſo convincing is this Logick, ſo perſwaſive is

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this Rhetorick, that the moſt refractory Enemies to Religion were never able to gainſay theſe Efforts, when God hath been pleaſed to make uſe of them to Converſion. Nor have they been more unſucceſsful Eſſays to carry on, and continue the believing Soul in the paths of peace, who have taſted and ſeen how good this Light (that Food of the Soul) is. The man who makes this guide to be a Light to his feet, and a Lanthorn to his paths, never periſhed from the right way, it being the certain Office of the Spirit when we are at any time tempted to the right hand or to the left, to ſay, *This is the way, walk in it.* By theſe means we are ſecured from falling, prevented from wandering. By the power of this renewing and aſſiſting grace, we are preſerved through Faith unto Salvation. No wonder then if forgiveneſs and pardon be a thing ſo deſirable, it being one of thoſe ſure Mercies of *David*, which, though it muſt be always attended with Repentance on our part, yet 'tis δῶρον ἀμεταμέλητον on God's part, a gift without Repentance: He having laid the foundation of our Heaven and Happineſs, like that of the Earth, as the Pſalmiſt ſpeaks, that it ſhould not be removed for ever, *Pſal.* 104. 5. Nay, and ſurer too, for the Pillars upon which that ſtands may be

ſhaken,

ſhaken, but though Heaven and Earth paſs away, yet not one jot or tittle of the good Word of the Lord ſhall fail. The Heavens may periſh, and as a Veſture ſhall the Lord change them, but that Robe of Immortality which the Lord puts upon a repenting, pardoned Prodigal, is ſubject to no Moth, nor any thing that can corrupt or fret it: Like thoſe the Children of *Iſrael* had in the Wilderneſs, they will never grow old. Who then would not with *Job* ſay, *Oh that my tranſgreſſions were forgiven! and why doſt thou not take away mine iniquity?* for when their debts are once diſcharged, they ſhall never more be brought upon account, either to charge or condemn them.

3. I proceed to ſpeak of [thoſe advantages by which forgiveneſs is recommended.] We have taken an account of the Body of this Tree, and alſo of the Root from whence it ſprings; let us now give a taſte of the Fruit which it affords, and how luſcious thoſe Grapes are to the palate, which grow upon this choice Vine; ſeeing we are come down into this Garden of Nuts, let us ſee the fruits of the Valley, how the Vine flouriſheth, and the Pomegranats bud.

Job 35. 3. *What profit ſhall I have if I be cleanſed from my ſin?*

1. The firſt fruit which grows upon this plant

plant [is peace with God, and reconciliation with the Father.] The partition Wall is now broken down; Thou who wert driven out from the preſence of the Lord, haſt liberty to return; a ſinner, whilſt he ſtands guilty and chargeable before the Lord, does as *David* ſpeaks, he remembers God and is troubled; and though he hath ſinned againſt God with a brow of Braſs and Iron ſinew, yet his countenance bears witneſs againſt him, and he bluſhes to appear before him; with *Adam*, he runs into every Thicket, nay behind every Fig-leaf, if it will prove a refuge, or a ſubterfuge, to hide the nakedneſs of his guilty Soul; now he is afraid, that where ever the Lord ſhould meet him, he ſhould ſlay him, ready to ſay of him, as *Ahab* to *Elijah*, *Haſt thou found me, oh mine Enemy?* or as the Devil to our Saviour, *Why doſt thou come to torment me before my time?* God never ſpeaks to him, but tis with a rough voice out of the Fire, or Whirlwind, which makes his ears to tingle, his heart to ſhake, unlooſing his joynts, and making his knees knock together. Theſe are thoſe dreadful Idea's formed in the guilty Conſcience, ſtained with ſin, and enraged with the utmoſt horrour and apprehenſion of that indignation and wrath, tribulation and anguiſh, to which ſin renders us ob-

noxious. But now all theſe fears vaniſh. When the Sun of Righteouſneſs is ariſen with healing under his wings, theſe ſhadows muſt flee away. The Lord creates the fruit of forgiveneſs, peace, peace to them that are afar off, and to them that are nigh. Before, every Arrow that was ſhot, had the ſame Errand with *Jonathan*'s to *David*, to tell him, that evil was determined by his Father againſt him; for, *There's no peace, ſaith my God, to the wicked.* The Lord ſaith to him, as *Jehu* to *Ahazia*, who asked, *Is it peace*, Jehu? *is it peace?* and he anſwered, *What haſt thou to do with peace? turn thee behind me.* But now all Hoſtilities are ceaſed, the Sword of Juſtice ſheathed, a League of Amity concluded, for he hath made an Everlaſting Covenant, ordered in all things, and ſure; now the Lion of the Tribe of *Judah* is become the Lamb of God, gentle, and eaſie to be entreated. When once our Spiritual Phyſician, by pardoning grace (as with a lump of Figs in another diſtemper) hath cured thy ſinful Ulcer, thou need not fear the ſecond death, that Meſſenger may walk about the ſtreets, but God hath given it charge not to enter thy dwelling. When the Lord had put away *David*'s iniquity, the next thing he tells him is, that he ſhould not die, 2 *Sam.* 12. 13.

When

When once ſin is caſt over-board, the Tempeſt ceaſeth of its own accord; the Sea of wrath is become calm and ſtill: Nor doth that angry Brow, which before wrinkled the face of the deep, any longer frown upon us; nor is the countenance of the Lord towards the ſinner as formerly, which in the day of his fierce wrath was eclipſed and fallen. But now on this wiſe hath the Lord bleſſed thee, he makes his face ſhine upon thee, and he is gracious unto thee; the Lord lifts up the light of his countenance upon thee, and gives thee peace, *Numb.* 6. 25, 26. Yea ſo great is his kindneſs and love to us, that he takes away the cauſe of any future Rupture; he hath done away our tranſgreſſions, and our iniquities he will remember no more: He hath paſſed an irrepealable Act of Oblivion; yea he is gone backward, and hath caſt the skirt of his Garment over our ſpiritual nakedneſs; Oh happy is he whoſe iniquity is pardoned, and whoſe ſin is thus covered! inſomuch that the Lord will not behold our deformity; he will not ſee any ſin in his Children, when he himſelf hath caſt that Veil over them, which no eye ſhall pierce through.

This reconciliation and peace with God is evident,

1. [From our freedom of acceſs] and admittance into his preſence.

2. [From his kind and bountiful conceſſions and returns he makes to our prayers,] 2 *Sam.* 14. 22.

1. [From a freedom of acceſs.] There is no bar nor bolt now upon the door of mercy, God hath taken the flaming Sword out of the hand of the *Cherubi*, which hindred thy approach, or endangered thy application to the tree of life. When *Abſalom* was reinſtated in the favour of his Prince, he had liberty not only to come into the palace, but preſence of his Father, he bowed himſelf before the King to the ground, and the King kiſſed *Abſalom*. When *Pharaoh* had conceived a diſpleaſure againſt *Moſes*, nothing could ſatisfy him, but he muſt be baniſht his court, and driven from his preſence for ever. Till the ſinner be reconciled to the Lord he muſt not approach his preſence. 'Tis death for ſuch beaſts to touch the mount, they muſt not come near *Shuſhan*, 'tis the Kings Palace. The Lord abhors the congregation of the wicked, *odi profanum vulgus & arceo*. Methinks he ſpeaks to them in the words of *Jacob*, Oh my Soul, come not thou into their ſecrets, and unto their aſſemblies,

2 Sam. 14. 22.

2 Sam. 14. 33.

Horat.

blies, mine honour, be thou not united. The fooliſh Virgins may knock at the door of ſalvation, and wait till their heads be wet with the drops, and their hair with the dew of the night, when their final entertainment will be only this; *Depart from me you that work iniquity, I profeſs I know you not.* But as to the penitent and pardoned ſinners, they meet with a more kind reception, they are brought into the banqueting houſe, and his banner over them is love. When God hath once purged and pardoned their iniquity, he delights to converſe with them. He ſaith, Come now and let us reaſon together, they hold a correſpondence, and take ſweet counſel together, all their actions are pleaſing, and their ſacrifices are ſweet perfumes in his noſtrils; Their garments now are no longer ſpotted with the fleſh, and then 'tis no wonder if the ſmell of them be as the ſmell of a fruitful field which the Lord hath bleſſed. Now the ſpiritual Oſtraciſm, and baniſhment is repealed. *The Spirit ſaith, Come, and the Bride ſaith, Come, and every one that is a thirſt may come to this fountain of the waters of life*; Now the breaſt of divine ordinances is held out to the Soul, where it may ſuck and be ſatisfied. The book of life is no longer ſealed.

1. [The doors of the ſanctuary ſtand open;] Where God is pleaſed to meet them, yea and bleſs them too in their attendance upon the preaching of the Word. *In all places where I record my name, there will I come unto thee, and bleſs thee,* Exod. 20. 24. *The Lord is with you whilſt you are with him.* 2 Chron. 15.2. *Where two or three are met together, there am I in the midſt of them, Matth.* 18. 20. A wicked man may come to the Temple of the Lord, and though he may ſeem to be very near Church, yet he is a great way from God, they come indeed to the Lord as his people come, and they ſit before him as his people ſit, but ſtill God is far from them. The Lord will not rend the vail (with which he hath covered his face) to look upon them; If he do 'tis but (as he lookt from behind the Pillar of Fire, upon the hoſt of *Pharaoh*) to confound thee, *Exod.* 14. 24. Nor can they expect a welcom who have no invitation. When you come to appear before me, who hath required theſe things at your hands? incenſe is an abomination to me. Thou art like the little Siſter ſpoken of in the *Cant.* thou haſt no breaſt of conſolation to ſuck at. Thou ſhalt not need to excommunicate thy ſelf, and ſo often turn thy back upon the houſe of the Lord, for if thou come thither the

the Lord turns his upon thee, that thou canſt not, as *David* ſaith, ſee his goings in the Sanctuary. So that though thou goeſt into his houſe, yet thou comeſt not into his preſence, who flees thee and abhors thy converſe. The Lamb of God will not lye down with ſuch a Lion, ſuch a Leopard as thou art; the Shepherd of *Iſrael* hath no fold for ſuch ſwine as thou art, who art no way fitted for the communion of Saints, which are clad in fine, in clean linnen, no dreſs for thoſe who delight to wallow in the mire. Much leſs is this herd fit to accompany with the Scape-Goat which is without ſpot. The wiſeman ſaith that a Prodigal perſon is a troubler of his own houſe: So is a wicked man of Gods houſe. The Lord is weary of the offerings which he there makes, he cannot away with them, he is not able to bear them. 'Tis the converted Soul only who is invited to bring his bucket to this well of Salvation. The Children of *Jacob* may go down to *Egypt* there is plenty of Corn ſown for them, yea the Lord Jeſus Chriſt their Elder brother, ready to receive them, and to fill their ſacks with the fineſt of the wheat, and that without money, without price. As *Hezekiah* dealt with the Babyloniſh Embaſſadors, he opens all his ſtore to them, he deals bountifully and

Pro. 11. 29.

freely with them. Here it is where he unbosoms himself, opens his breast, that they may see all the motions of his Soul, the pantings of his heart, the yerning of his bowels to them.

Q. *But hath the faithful only access into the Sanctuary, is there no unrighteous person there, no not one? Is there such a door-keeper in the Lords house, that will admit none but those who have the seal of God upon their foreheads?*

R. Our experience too evidently proves the contrary, our field hath tares as well as wheat growing in it, the beams of the Gospel shine both upon the good & upon the bad, that dew distils upon the just and unjust. 'Tis true the Stars in Gods right hand, I mean the Ministers of the Gospel, those Sons of the morning may shine upon the eyes of the worst of men, but never into their hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of God in the face of Jesus Christ. The Lord seals up the luscious influence of these *Pleiades*, that the seed sown grows not up in the fruits of righteousness; For the Gospel is hid to these that perish. *Pariter adeunt, pariter audiunt*, saith St. *Austine*. They come before the Lord as his people comes, and sit before him as his people sit, but their hearts

hearts are far from him, neither is the Lords heart with *them*, for he loves *them* not, neither have they any deſire towards *him*. The bread of life their Souls loath. If a meſs be nicely cookt, perhaps they will dip a little in the ſauce, if there be a quaint expreſſion, ſome ſingular Philoſophical notion, they'll chew perhaps or ruminate upon that; When they are in this garden of Nuts, if they meet with a Rhetorical Flower, they'l crop that, and fancy a great deal of ſweetneſs in the faint and fulſom ſcent of that Oratorical plant. Might they have their own choice, they'd never trouble, nor go to the Temple of the Lord, but to examine the vael, and pluck a ſpangle thence: But to pierce behind it, to ſee the face of God in the beauties of holineſs, it never entred into their hearts to deſire. So that 'tis no wonder if the Lord declines their converſe, and denies them acceſs to his preſence, even whilſt they are in his own houſe. Whereas the true Chriſtian longs after communion with God in his Word, and hath it. Otherwiſe all Goſpel ordinances, are but dry bones there's no life nor power in them, his language is like that of *Abſalom*, What ſhould I do at *Jeruſalem* if I may not ſee the Kings face? What ſhould I do at Church if I may not meet with my God there, and ſee him as it

were

were face to face in the Glaſs of his Word, nor can he be ſatisfied unleſs with *David* he ſees the Glory and Power of God in his Sanctuary. Without this he cannot be content. To meet Chriſt he will enquire by the footſteps of the flock, will take any pains, and account nothing grievous but the want of his Saviour. *Omnes mihi labores leves fuere præterquam tui carendum quod erat.*

2. As the impenitent and unreconciled ſinner is expelled from the Temple; So alſo [from the Table of the Lord] to which the pardoned ſinner hath a free acceſs. I ſhall take a little Liberty to ſpeak ſomething of this nature, not accounting it a digreſſion, ſeeing oppoſites very well ſerve the turn of each other in a mutual illuſtration; he is divorced *à toro & menſa.* The Lord Jeſus Chriſt, who is as a bed of Spices, he muſt not come near, in the beſt ſence, and for the Childrens bread, there's not one crumb, which falls from our Fathers Table, that will come to the ſhare of ſuch dogs as theſe are.

1. Thou haſt no invitation to this Spiritual feaſt. The Lord ſaith, Ho every one that thirſts let him come, but thou haſt no ſpiritual appetite, no hunger, no thirſt after righteouſneſs. He ſaith, Eat, Oh Friends, yea drink abundantly,

bundantly, Oh beloved. But thou art an enemy to God, to the life and power of Religion and Godlineſs, one of a vitiated Palate, that ſavoureſt not the things of God, thou art for Meat of another dreſs, cookt after the Garlick Strain, and ſcented with the Onions of *Egypt*. Theſe are the husks they chooſe to feed upon, theſe are the diſhes they delight to dip in, and theſe are they which betray their Saviour and their Souls too: Who may perhaps unawares creep into this feaſt of fat things; But if it be demanded, how they came in hither, they muſt be ſpeechleſs, for they received no invitation, they are uninvited Gueſts. The Stewards of this great Myſtery, have no commiſſion to call them to the Supper of the Lamb. 'Tis true the Spirit ſaith, Come, & the Bride ſaith Come, but 'tis to them that are athirſt they ſay, Come. And theſe to be ſure are not they who drink down iniquity like water, and that are filled with the Wine of their abominations. The Bride ſaith, Come, but 'tis to thoſe who have put on the Wedding Garment, the ſmell of which is in the noſtrils of the Lord as of a field which he hath bleſt. Theſe may eat the ſavoury meat which is prepared for them, that they may be bleſt before they die. 'Tis true the invitation is ſometimes abſolutely propounded, Go into

into the high ways and fields, and bid them to the Supper. But Repentance and Reformation are conditions tacitly implied, as is evident by his standing mute, & having nothing to reply, when it was demanded of him how he came thither without the wedding garment. He did not, he durst not say, it was not mentioned in his summons, for that he knew it was always intended. When *Joseph* was sent for, though with haste, into the King's presence, he needed not be bidden to shave his head, and change his raiment: God never sends for any into his presence, but he expects they should shave their heads, and change their prison garments, especially those who have been led away captive by Satan at his will.

2. Nor can they expect who are not bidden to the Feast, to be bidden welcom at it. These come uninvited to this Entertainment, and so are no better than spots in this Feast, eye-sores to him that cannot behold iniquity: And then how can they hope for a favourable aspect? When *David* came to *Saul*'s Table, 'tis said, *his countenance was not towards him as it was wont*; he was no welcom Guest to him. I am sure he that stands in the way of sinners, that sits in the seat of the scornful, will find the Lord's countenance to be fallen towards

towards him; nor will the language of his lips prove any ſweeter dialect; they will not drop Myrrh, but Vinegar and Gall, which will be the portion and mixture of their Cup; the wrath of the Lord will be wrung into it, whilſt thou maiſt dream that thou art taking of a full draught out of the Cup of Salvation; but when thou awakeſt to a juſt conſideration of thy eſtate, you will find it ſuch as you will deſire may paſs from you. Then will thy reception be no other than, *Depart from me, I profeſs I know you not; you cannot partake of the Cup of the Lord, and of the Cup of Devils*; Friend, how cameſt thou in hither? why doſt thou take the bread of life into thy mouth, ſeeing thou hateſt to be reformed? Methinks this welcom ſhould ſpoil thy ſtomach, or fill it ſo full, that thou ſhouldſt have but a little appetite to this Feaſt of fat things, where the Well of Salvation will fill thy Bucket with no other than the Waters of Jealouſie, which will make thy belly ſwell, and thy thigh rot. That Manna, the bread of life thou feedeſt on, will breed that Worm which will fret thy bowels, and will pain thee at the very heart, which introduceth a third conſideration, which will ſpoil thy acceſs unto the Lord, and further aggravates thy miſery whilſt thy ſin ſtands up on the ſcore.

3. You

3. You will reap no comfort nor advantage from it; you may dream you eat, but you awake, and your Soul is empty; thou maiſt dream thou drinkeſt, but thou awakeſt, and thy Soul is thirſty. The King's meat thou here feedeſt upon, will not make thee any thing more fair and well-favoured, for thou ſurfeiteſt whilſt the fleſh is between thy teeth: At beſt, all thou receiveſt is but the outward element, and that affords no nouriſhment! What thou feedeſt upon are but husks, theſe are all which the Father of the Family of Heaven and Earth vouchſafes to the Swine of the world; Whilſt the pardoned and reconciled Soul plucks of the fruit of the Tree of Life, eats and lives for ever: At the breaſt of the Goſpel he ſucks the ſincere Milk of the Word, that he might grow thereby: At this breaſt of ſtrong Conſolation, he ſucks the blood of the Lamb of God ſlain before the foundation of the world was laid, by which divine and holy Transfuſion, he is renewed in the ſpirit of his mind. Here his weak Faith is confirmed, and his bruiſed Reed becomes a Pillar of Braſs, whilſt our Saviour calls him, as he did St. *Thomas*, to put his fingers into the hole of his ſide, and to feel the print of the nails by which he was faſtned to the Croſs, that he might looſen the

the bands of our iniquities. Here he feeds his people with the fineſt of the Wheat: Now they are become Children, and therefore he provides Children's bread for them. Now they are become Sons, they are Heirs to all the Priviledges of the Sons of God: They are now invited to this Table, yea to lean in their Saviour's boſom, for they are pardoned and reſtored to his favour: It may be ſaid of them, they are all the Diſciples whom Jeſus loves. We have ſaid before, that ungodly men are but as ſpots in theſe Feaſts; the Lord looks upon them with a ſevere eye, his eye-lids try, yea condemn theſe Children of men, whilſt he caſts a favourable aſpect upon his own people: He kiſſes them with the kiſſes of his mouth; and no wonder, for now the Bill of Divorcement is not to be found, 'tis repealed and cancelled; they are once more the Bride, the Lamb's Wife, over whom the Lord ſpreads his Mantle, whilſt the ſinner is covered with ſhame, he is bound hand and foot, and caſt into outer darkneſs; the Fruit he plucks from this forbidden Tree ſurfeits, it doth not ſatisfie; the Sop he takes makes room for Satan to enter after it, but never prepares him as an habitation fit to entertain his Saviour, that King of glory; this will be the effect of his feeding in this

green

greenPasture; *viz.* to be fitted, fatted up for the slaughter.

3. Their Prayers will be of no advantage to them, because they are an abomination to the Lord: The sinner in the day of his impenitency may call, but he will not hear him; he may seek him early, but he will be never the nearer, for he shall not find him; 'twill be in vain to knock, when his own sin hath bolted the door of mercy against him; he may say, *Lord, Lord, open to us*; but he will say, *Depart from me.* Alas! they must be excluded, for Heaven Gate is lockt up, and they have never a Key will answer it. *If I regard iniquity in my heart*, saith *David*, *the Lord will not hear my prayers*; though his righteousness could not extend to the Lord, yet his unrighteousness, in some sense did, the iniquity of our hands often causeth a deafness in the ears of the Almighty: God never bows his ear to a stiff-necked sinner. He that hath got a Brow of Brass, will find Heaven to be so too, impenetrable and without access, *Isa.* 1. 16, 17, 18. *Cease to do evil, learn to do well; come now and let us reason together.* He that will find the Lord, must first seek Judgment. God invites them to a com-

When you make many prayers I will stop mine ears, and when you lift up your hands, I will shut mine eyes, for your hands are full of blood, Isa. 1.

communication and converſe with himſelf; *Come now and let us reaſon together, though your ſins were as Scarlet,* &c. But firſt they muſt break off their correſpondence and converſe with ſin; *ceaſe to do evil.* Suppoſe thy ſin of the deepeſt dye, and ſtained with the moſt envenomed tincture, yet if thou wilt waſh thy ſelf, and make thee as clean as thou canſt, with the tears and laver of Repentance, Chriſt will waſh thee in the laver of his own Blood; he will purge thee with Hyſſop, that thou maiſt be clean, and waſh thee, that thou maiſt be whiter than Snow, *Pſal.* 51. 7. Otherwiſe with the Prieſts of *Baal,* thou maiſt gaſh and cut thy ſelf with Stones, and cry from morning until evening, but it will be but *ſurdo canere*: Or if the Lord do anſwer, it will be ſo as by fire, which will conſume thee as ſtubble, *Mat.* 25. 41, 46. *Depart from me, ye curſed, into everlaſting burnings*; ſuch is the miſery and miſchief thou involveſt thy ſelf in, that no Tongue can tell it, of that dimenſion and latitude, that no heart can meaſure or conceive it. Thou art one of the Daughters of God's people, who hath got a deſperate hurt, and thou haſt none to cure it, there's no Balm for thee in *Gilead,* there's no Phyſician there. If the good *Samaritan* paſs by thee, if he hath no eye to

pity thee (as how canſt thou expect it, ſeeing by thine own impenitency thy heart is hardened againſt thy ſelf?) thou maiſt, with *Eſau*, lift up thy voice aloud, and cry, Lord, help me, but he will not anſwer thee a word. The repenting ſinner is bleſt, and he ſhall be bleſſed; there is no birth-right for thee, tho thou ſeekeſt it with tears: Thou maiſt labour all night (as the Diſciples when they were fiſhing) but thou catcheſt nothing. All thy words will be but wind, and thy moſt earneſt prayers nothing but beating of the wind, which if thou ſoweſt, thou wilt reap the whirlwind, that will diſſipate thee as chaff, who in the worſt ſenſe art lighter than vanity What St. *Paul* ſpeaks in another caſe, may be in ſome ſort applied in this; when thou prayeſt, thou ſpeakeſt into the Air; thou art a *Barbarian* to the Almighty; he underſtandeth not thy rude and barbarous language, nor canſt thou ever expect that he ſhould ſay *Amen* to thee. No marvel then if a ſinner ſo paſſionately begs forgiveneſs, that he may have acceſs with boldneſs to the Throne of Grace. If he be often ſaying, Oh! Why doſt thou not pardon my tranſgreſſion, and take away mine iniquity? If with *Rachel* he cries, Give me this bleſſing or elſe I die; and the rather, becauſe now I am about

to

to die. This was that which kept *Job* thus waking now that he was ready to ſleep in the duſt. But

2. The ſecond fruit which pardon of ſin produceth is [peace of Conſcience.] This is another Cluſter, which grows out of this true Vine, (If I may call it ſo) from whence is preſt that Wine which makes the heart glad. A good, a quiet Conſcience is a continual feaſt; now from hence it is, that its Table is furniſhed, and that it fares ſo deliciouſly every day. When the Oxen and Fatlings, the Bulls of *Baſan*, (I mean our ſins) are ſlain. Then does pardoning grace, mix as it were a Cup of ſpiced Wine which it cauſeth the Soul to drink off, which is the juice preſſed from this *Pomegranate* in the Text, *viz.* The pardon of ſin, beſides which all are but as ſour grapes, which may Edge the teeth, or perhaps intoxicate the Head, 'tis this Wine alone that drops from this tender and luſcious Grape which refreſhes the heart. 'Tis no little pain the Soul feels when the Sting of death, (*viz.* Sin) ſtrikes the Conſcience, 'tis a fire that burneth all the day; the ſparks which hence are enkindled in our boſoms, often make us ſit in aſhes. Yea ſo black a thing is it, that it makes darkneſs our ſecret place, nor hath the guilty Cant. 8. 2.

perſon any other pavilion round about him, than thoſe dark waters and thick clouds. The ſorrows of death encompaſs him, and the floods of this ungodly thing (I mean his ſin) make him afraid. *Saul* was never more haunted by his evil Spirit, than he by this Shadow of the Body of Death, *viz.* His guilt and horrour. His iniquity is ever before him. But when the Lord ſends pardon from above, he takes, he draws the ſinner out of theſe many waters, and delivers him from that enemy which is too ſtrong for him. When the Lord hath once tuned the harp of *David*, the evil Spirit can no longer abide it. When the Key of *David* hath opened the door of Salvation, then he enters into the joy of his Lord. The fountain of iniquity being once ſtopt, the floods of ſorrow are ſoon dryed up. He muſt be of good comfort whoſe ſins are forgiven. He cannot be in the Gall of bitterneſs, who is delivered from the bonds of iniquity. When the Prophet told *David* that God had done away his ſin, it ſet all his bones which he complained were out of joint. 'Tis hard to imagine what eaſe he found when they were thus bound up and mollified with Ointment. Sin had made his wounds ſtink and be corrupt. He was in that condition as he knew

Pſa. 18. 11.

In noxam ſectatur & umbra.

knew not what to do. When *Job* ſat upon the dunghil, having from the Crown of his head to the ſole of his foot, no ſoundneſs in him, yet he found an inſtrument to cleanſe him. But how ſhall the iniquity of *Jacob* be purged? Sin is a leproſy tha ſticks very cloſe, nor can the body of death be ſcraped with a potſheard; He was in great diſtreſs, he mourned like a dove, he chattered like a crane, he knew not what to ſay, for he had ſinned againſt the preſerver of men. His conſcience told him againſt him only he had offended, and had done a great evil in his ſight. This bore witneſs againſt him, yea and as an impartial Inqueſt, had paſſed a ſevere Verdict on him, he had the ſentence of death in himſelf, as St. *Paul* ſpeaks, 2 *Cor.* 1. 19. But whilſt his Soul was like a troubled Sea, that hath no reſt, to how great a calm and compoſure was that ſtorm reduced, upon the declaration of his pardon by the Prophet *Nathan*? A guilty perſon may well be ſtiled *Benoni*, *a Son* of ſorrow. Such an one was St. *Peter* when he went out and wept bitterly. His tears are his meat day and night. He is like the Hart which finds no paſture (for ſuch is as good as none) and is gone without ſtrength before the purſuer ſo feeble is he which is ſore broken with the Lam. 1. 6.

ſenſe of his ſin. But pardoning grace binds up the broken hearted. And 'tis the fruit of forgiveneſs to take away his ſin, which hath been like a Spear in the ſide of Conſcience, wounding it to the very heart. But this is the hand which plucks it out.

1. As it frees it from the guilt of ſin. This is that venom, which alwaies attends the ſting of this fiery Serpent; 'Tis that evil Spirit which ever torments and haunts the offender ſuffering him to take no reſt day nor night. * Indeed how can he when his guilty conſcience (which hath not the tongue of a ſtammerer) is alwaies telling him plainly that the Lord hath ſealed up his iniquities in a bag, and written them in a book, where there is a diſmal account to be produced, upon the great day of reckoning? But when ſin is remitted this book comes forth with a new impreſſion, where all the Errata are expunged, and our iniquities blotted out: Now Conſcience may caſt away its tally, for the Lord hath quitted the ſinners ſcores. Now that roaring Lyon faileth for lack of prey, and the fire which ſin hath enkindled in our breaſts muſt needs go out, when God in mercy hath withdrawn the fuel

* *When deep ſleep falls upon me, fear came upon me & trembling, which made all my bones to ſhake,* Job 4. 13, 14.

fuel which alone can feed it. Now the voice of this grinder ceaſeth, or if it utters any 'tis in a ſtill and ſmoother dialect than formerly. It ſpeaks comfortably, comfortably to the Soul, which by virtue of its pardon is no way obnoxious to the curſe or terrors of the Law.

2. As it diſchargeth it from the puniſhment of ſin. This is a juſt corollary and conſequence of the former. If our Conſciences cannot accuſe us, nor hearts condemn us, becauſe God hath juſtified us; where is he that can do Execution upon us? Now Hell and Death are ſwallowed up in Victory. We may now triumph over them. The bottomleſs pit is filled up. It cannot ſwallow us. Death 'tis true is a fiery Dragon, (the ſecond death eſpecially:) But we may ſet our feet upon the Neck of it, and ſay, *Oh Death, where's thy Sting? Oh grave, where's thy Victory?* The Sting of death is ſin. And that pardoning mercy hath pluckt out. This makes the Soul anoint its face, aray it ſelf delicately, and with comfort and confidence appear in the preſence of the Lord. This is that honey which flows out of the Rock of our Salvation, which is at all times grateful to the Palate of a penitent, but more eminently when he is about to taſt a bitter Cup. Which

brings me to the conſideration of the ſecond General in the Text, *viz.* The Allegation and Plea, as a juſt argument and enforcement to his Petition.

[For now I ſhall ſleep in the duſt.] As if he had ſaid, Lord I am now entring into the Land of darkneſs, Oh wilt thou not lift up the light of thy countenance upon me? I am paſſing into the place of forgetfulneſs, ſhall I not now be remembred? I am now lying down in the bed of the Grave, Lord make it eaſy to me, by the forgiveneſs of my ſin. He ſaw Death, he heard his pale Horſe daſh, but loth he was that Hell ſhould follow after, and ſcatter brimſtone upon his habitation, *Job* 18. 15. He was about to chaſe him out of this world, but loth he was to be driven from light into utter darkneſs. He was to become free among the dead as all his Fathers were, but unwilling to be deſpoiled of the glorious Liberty of the Sons of God, to be fettered in the Chains of darkneſs for ever. And better than this he could not expect, whilſt he labours under the guilt of ſo much ſin. If now his pardon was not ſigned, he is ſealed up under an everlaſting irrevocable ſentence of Death, and conſequently of endleſs torment: Nay (what's eſteemed worſe) of being puniſhed from the preſence of the Lord, and glory

glory of his power for ever. No wiſe man will at any time dally with matters of great import, and concern. But to trifle with or to be unconcerned for eternity, when we are upon the border of it, is an unaccountable folly. *Jonas* was as ſupine and careleſs, as he was an angry Prophet, to be ſleeping in the Ship when he was ready to ſleep in the duſt, or what was morally the ſame, ready to make his bed in the mighty waters, to be ſure it was high time to awake, and for that ſleeper to ſtand up and call upon his God. Thus did *Job* ſtir up himſelf with the imminency of his danger, (like the diſciples when the Ship was ready to ſink with the waves.) He cries out, Maſter, ſave me or I muſt periſh; Now blot out my tranſgreſſion, or it will for ever ſtand upon account againſt me. Now quaſh the Indictment which Juſtice or mine own Conſcience brings in againſt me: For if I once fall aſleep in the duſt, mine Honour, my Life, my Happineſs, all mine Expectations will ceaſe, be laid in the duſt, and periſh for ever. From this quiver doth the patient man chuſe his arrow. Indeed from what more prevalent, and concluſive Topick could he argue, and plead with the Almighty for pardon and forgiveneſs? Which the argument preſſeth for, eſpecially at this time, upon ſeveral accounts.

1. From

1. From an inability of any future management of this great affair, for if he were once fallen aſleep his working time would be at an end. As if he had ſaid, Let it be now, becauſe this is the only time that I have to proſecute my everlaſting intereſts, and to obtain a grant of forgiveneſs. Now is the accepted time, now is the day of Salvation: And therefore this good man ſeeks the Lord and his righteouſneſs, becauſe it is the only time in which he will be found. He was ſenſible that if the grave had once ſhut his mouth upon him, he might ſhut his too. For then he might call, but the Lord would not anſwer, he might ſeek him early, but he would not be found. His loving kindneſs ſhall not be declared in the grave, nor his faithfulneſs in deſtruction. His wonders ſhall not be known in darkneſs, nor his righteouſneſs in the Land of forgetfulneſs. This is the day that God hath appointed man to go out to his ſpiritual labour. And this was the reaſon that he was ſo earneſt, (now eſpecially in the evening or concluſion of it) to finiſh his courſe, and adjuſt his accounts with the Almighty; willing he was to have his *Quietus eſt* now paſt, that nothing might be hereafter laid to his charge. He had ſown his ſeed in the morning. But now

Pſa. 88. 11, 12.

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in the evening he was loth to with-hold his hand, becauſe he remembred that night was coming on, and then he muſt ceaſe ſowing, give over working. No wonder then if with ſo much paſſion and holy zeal he intreats forgiveneſs, that he cries out, and with *Rachel* refuſes to be comforted, until his ſins be not. Eccl. 11. 6.

'Tis the opinion of late Philoſophers, that the particles of matter, are more ſwift and vigorous, when the paſſage is pent, and ſpace narrow, in which they are to move. The ſame cauſe may be aſſigned, why the motions of *Job*'s heart were ſo paſſionate and quick heaven-ward; it was becauſe he was *in anguſtiis*, reduced to his laſt and greateſt ſtreight. The laſt charge the Souldier makes is commonly a ſummons of all his Vigour and Valour, as being his utmoſt and ultimate attempt, and effort againſt his enemy; ſo will any wiſe man when he is at the laſt puſh and pinch, upon which eternity, his everlaſting State depends, he will act *ad extremum virium*, he will with all his might pour out his prayer before the Lord, becauſe he is ready to pour out his Soul, and to breathe his laſt. And then he knew that there would be no further proffers nor propoſitions of life, or means (and ſo conſequently no hopes) of Salvation. There

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are no Commiſſions ſealed to any to preach to the Souls in priſon, the feet of thoſe who bring the glad tidings of the Goſpel are beautiful, but we ſhall find no footſteps or impreſſions of them in another world. The beams of the Goſpel, are very expenſive, but they never extend themſelves to the Land of darkneſs. The Spirit of God is to do the Office of a remembrancer, but he never promiſed to ſend it into the Land of forgetfulneſs. There's too great a Gulf for *Abraham* or *Lazarus* to paſs over, to bring the leaſt drop of the water of life to the moſt thirſty Soul. Now the fountain's ſealed. Thoſe who ſhut their ears to all the charmings of the Goſpel formerly, will now find their mouths ſtopt, which lift up their voices like a Trumpet. The Lord ſaid, Go not into the way of the Gentiles; They will be then got into the way where theſe Meſſengers never come. Into that Country through which there lies no path of peace. Now, oh thou profane *Eſau* delighteſt not in the Goſpel, then it will be far from thee. Now thou ſtoppeſt thine ears, then this Charmer will ſtop his mouth, never to open it more. What's the wicked mans wiſh now, will be a great part of his hell hereafter. There ſhall be no more praying, no more preaching. Now the Maſter of the houſe ſends out

out his Servants, his Miniſters, to perſwade & ſo far as they are able to compel them to come in: But then the door will be ſhut, there will be no more calls, no more invitations; The Embaſſadors of peace ſhall be called home, everlaſting War is proclaimed, Fire and Sword will devour for ever. Or oh that they would devour! but that cannot be. For if they ſeek for death, it will flee from them; If they dig for it as for hid treaſure, they ſhall not find it, *Job* 3. 21. Which longs for death, but it comes not, and dig for it more than for hid treaſure, which rejoyce exceedingly, and are glad when they find the grave. He that is unrighteous, may be unrighteous ſtill; He that is filthy may be filthy ſtill. For methinks I hear the Lord ſaying, I would have purged thee but thou wouldeſt not be purged, thou ſhalt not be purged from thy filthines any more, till I have cauſed my fury to reſt upon thee, *Ezek.* 24. 13.

Shouldſt thou with *Balak* give any of the Lords prophets thine houſe full of Silver or Gold to go with thee, to offer ſacrifice for thee, or bleſs thee, they will not, they cannot do it, or go beyond the Commiſſion the Lord hath given them to do more or leſs. To ſee the husbandman buſy in the ſpring to prepare his Land, to ſow his ſeed is a very reaſonable,

ſonable, and accountable Service, for if his time be ſlipt, he is forecloſed as to any future crop. Is a Chriſtian active and buſy breaking up the fallow ground of his heart, ſowing his ſeed? This is λογικὴ λατρεία, a very juſtifiable diligence. If he loſe his ſeed time, there's none to be hereafter expected. And if Light be not now ſown it will never ſpring up, but will be ſhut up in darkneſs for ever. Now is our accepted time, now is our day of Salvation. Now it is that the Lord calls us to repentance, expoſing his Wine and Milk without money and without price. But this Market will not laſt alwaies. The time will come, when thou art in the grave, that this ſeaſon will be over; Thou wilt find that Viſion is but for an appointed time. There will be no Oyl to furniſh thy Lamp with: It will be then all expended in quickning thoſe flames, wherein every unpardoned ſinner will be grievouſly tormented. Now the Goſpel diſtils, as the former, as the latter rain, but then thou wilt come into a dry heath and barren wilderneſs, a Land where no Water is, all thy freſh ſprings ſhall be dried up. When thy pitcher is once broken at the fountain, thy Lamp will be put out, which ſhould be as a Light to thy Feet and Lanthorn to thy paths. Could pardon ſpring out of the duſt of the grave,

grave, were there any door of hope to be found in the Valley of the Shadow of Death, it might have tended to have allay'd the paſſion, and abated the fervency of *Job*'s wiſh, but the Light of Gods Countenance never ſprings up in the Land of darkneſs. I lately obſerved that it was a dry heath and a Barren Wilderneſs. 'Tis ſo true in this ſenſe that it can never bear this pleaſant plant, *viz.* The pardon of ſin. I may ſpeak in the words of our Saviour, Oh *Jeruſalem*, *Jeruſalem*, &c. Oh poor Soul that thou hadſt known at leaſt in this thy day the things which concerned thy peace! but now they are hid from thine eyes. There was a time when thou mighteſt have been brooded under his ſhady wings, but you would not, now you cannot, you might have been built up a Temple fit for his holy Spirit to dwell in, but thy houſe is left unto thee deſolate, and there is no further opportunity of repairing the breaches. Thy tabernacle is fallen and ſo it muſt lye. There will be no future accommodation for thee here, nor way to finiſh thy tranſgreſſion, or to make an end of ſin; the Lord will not forgive, he will not hearken nor do, for his names ſake; and therefore no wonder if the daughter of Gods people be ſo paſſionate in her inquiry after her beloved, let not the daughters of *Jeruſa-*

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lem wonder if ſhe be ſick and faint till ſhe be ſtaid with theſe apples, comforted with theſe flagons, mentioned in the Text, the pardon of ſin, the forgiveneſs of iniquity.

2. Nor is this the only cauſe of its Spiritual paſſion; for as there is no means of Salvation here; [So neither will there ever be any expectation of a recovery, of that means now loſt.] He that hath entred the Gates of Death, will find them Gates of Braſs, he can never break through, nor return. He is carried away into Captivity, and his ſeventy weeks will never be accompliſht, that he may return into the Good Land, a Land of Olives, to drop fatneſs on him, or to make his face ſhine. For now if the Sun ſet in a Cloud, it will prove an everlaſting Eclipſe. The ſame parable may be taken up as was once concerning *Amalek*, his latter end was that he ſhould periſh for ever. Now it many times happens, that we lye down in ſorrow over night, but joy returns in the morning, and though the evening may be Cloudy with trouble and thick darkneſs, yet the Sun riſes in the morning, and ſcatters thoſe miſts, ſo that we awake and are ſatisfied with the likeneſs of ſome renewed comfort and content. We ſee the Waters of the Sea ſometimes running back into its

Num. 24. 20.

its boſom, till it be at a very low Ebb; But ere long the floods return, overflow the banks, coming to the ſame height it before roſe to. But if this Sun of righteouſneſs ſet, or part with us at the grave, it never riſes again. Who ſhall go down to the deep to bring it up from thence? Or who ſhall go up to Heaven to bring it down from thence, to cauſe him to ſhine upon our Tabernacle that is fallen, and can never riſe more? The Poets words are true in another kind of ſenſe than he ever dreamt of; *Non animus, non vita redit prior, O Bone nobis vivere das iterum?*

Our ſhadow is poſting forward every day, every moment, and if it be once gone down the degrees of the horoſcope, there's no hand can retrieve it, we ſhall be like *Jeremiah*, when he was in the Mire and Clay, he could not by all his Art and Skill extricate himſelf. If once we be ſunk into the horrible pit, I know no *Jacob*'s ladder by which we can aſcend, there comes no Merchant men that way to purchaſe or procure our Redemption, from that bottomleſs pit into which our guilt, and a juſt ſentence have for ever deſtined and deſigned us. For the ſentence which is paſt at this Bar is never to be reverſed; There's

1. No authority or power can do it.

no Authority Superior, or Paramount to him, who is God over all. *Joab* may offer his sentiment against the Kings Command, but yet the Royal Authority overbore it in numbring the people. But behold a greater than *David* is here, whose Soveraign and Supream command prostrates every thing which stands before it, and prevails against all principalities and powers; So that the purpose of the Lord as to the sinners eternal doom and destruction shall stand. It may happen sometimes amongst men, that he who hath less authority may have the greatest power; by which, like an unruly Sted, he tramples his rider under foot. There be many that can yet witness, that even in our *Israel*, how men of an inferiour order have taken the most Soveraign Power and Prince by the beard, yea have smote him and slew him. Tell it not in *Gath, &c.* Here the most mutinous *Barabbas*'s may have their Chains knockt off, and the Prison doors set open for their escape: But there's no power that can deliver out of the Lords hand. If he will cast the sinful debter into Prison; there's no Angel, Principality or Power that can break those Gates open. As the Angel did the Iron gate for St. *Peter*. Associate your selves together, oh ye people, and ye shall

ſhall be broken in pieces, let them gird themſelves, and they ſhall be broken in pieces, let them take Counſel together, and it ſhall be brought to nought. Let them ſpeak the word, but it ſhall not ſtand; ſo that the ſinner hath no hope to be reſcued, by a ſtrong hand or ſtretched out arm. Who can deliver out of the Lords hand? There's no *Samſon* ſtrong enough to take off the Gates of Hell, and ſet the condemned ſinner looſe from everlaſting deſtruction. Nor can the moſt politick deſigns or projects compaſs thy reſcue, or deliver thee, (oh thou that art doomed to deſtruction) out of the hands of the Almighty. Hell is that ſtrong hold that can never be taken, either by ſtorm or Stratagem. Take Counſel together ſaith the Prophet; But it ſhall come to nought. There remains nothing more then as an expedient of Salvation but interceſſion, but alas that will be as dry a breaſt, and barren a womb as any of the reſt. For in that day we may call, but he will not anſwer, we may ſeek him early, but we ſhall not find him. And if he hath declared that he will not bow his ear, 'tis ſcarce to be expected that he ſhould bow the Heavens and come down to releaſe us. And for the Saints, to which of them ſhall

Iſa. 8. 9, 10.

2. No Council.

3. No interceſſion.

we learn as prevalent Oratours on our behalf? When if *Moses* and *Samuel*; if *Noah*, *Daniel* and *Job* stand before him they may save their own, but not the sinners Soul, which lies under the execution of that sentence which admits of no arrest. He is gone down to the Gates of Death from whence there's no possible way to return. We may say of it, as the wise man speaks of an Whorish Woman,

Pro. 2. 19. None that go into her house return, neither take they hold of the paths of life.

4. No Covenant nor promise of deliverance, or any means in order to it.

But further, there is no pact, nor covenant, promise or consent on Gods part to bestow deliverance, and to look for it without, is to build the Castle of hope upon the meer air of fancy and presumption. Yea this is that unaccountable heighth of folly, that few of its greatest proficients ever yet attain'd to. When the Lord had embarkt man in the first Covenant, he was on board a Vessel, which (if well steered and managed) might have brought him to a safe port. But alas where the two Seas met, of mans infirmity, and *Satans* policy, it was broken in pieces. But the Lord being unwilling to see our proud enemy triumph in so great a wreck, go away with such a trophy,

and

and become Maſter of ſo unvaluable a prize, he was pleaſed to caſt out *poſt naufragium tabulam*, making a ſecond propoſition in order to a recovery, but now to Skip over-board with expectation that ſome kind hand will ſtretch forth it ſelf and ſave us, is a degree of madneſs, that one would think the greateſt Students in the Schools of it, never yet proceeded to. To believe things, which are no where revealed, is not only difficult, to ſuppoſe rational, but impoſſible. That a man can't believe unleſs he hear, and that faith comes by hearing, is both Scripture and Reaſon too: So that to believe without any revelation, is to ſtem the current of both, and to offer violence to our ſelves both as Chriſtians and men. And this muſt be before we can flatter our ſelves into the leaſt imaginary hope of deliverance or ſalvation; Nay we muſt put off our ſelves before we can put on, or be clothed with ſuch (to ſay no worſe) idle prepoſſeſſions. When God declares that he will ſhew his loving kindneſs in the grave; Then they who go down into the pit may hope for his truth. But ſeeing there are no hopes of any future welfare to ſpring out of the duſt, where we are about to ſleep; 'Tis no wonder if thoſe who are with *Job* wiſe to ſalvation, endeavour

Rom. 10 14, 17.

to make a more early plantation, and chuſe a fitter ſoyl than the grave is like to prove. But that which puts more weight into the ballance of this argument,

3. [Is that he was going to appear before the great Tribunal, and to have Judgment paſs upon him;]So that if his ſin was not pardoned, ſhould he die before that Patent was ſealed by the blood of Chriſt, he ſhould have no plea why the Sentence of death eternal ſhould not paſs againſt him. He ſaw now that the gates of * death were ready to prevail againſt him; loth he was that the gates of Hell ſhould do ſo too. To live where the Worm never dies, ſeemed very hard, and to become a Tenant to ſo hot an houſe, where the fire never goes out, under ſo long a Leaſe, which hath days without number, was incomparably ſad. A light burthen carried far will crook a ſtrong back: But what will an exceeding and eternal weight of miſery do? *Job* was now lanching into the vaſt Ocean of eternity, but willing he was to ſtow the *Cargo* of his Soul right, leſt he ſhould be over-ſet and ſhipwrackt in thoſe mighty waters. And ſeeing he was now ready to die, he would make his Will firſt, and ſo ſettle his ſpiritual concerns,

* *My breath is corrupt, my days are extinct, the graves are ready for me,* Job 17. 1.

cerns, that there might not be a flaw in his title to a far better Inheritance, than that the grave was ready to diſſeize him of. Now he was ſhooting of the gulph, and paſſing that μέγα χάσμα of the grave, as being bound for another world, a new Heaven, a new Earth, and there dwells righteouſneſs, into which he knew an unrighteous man could never enter; he underſtood that the Sword of Juſtice, like that in the hand of the Cherubin, turned every way to defend the entrance into the Paradice of Heaven, and fruit of the Tree of Life, which grows in the midſt of it, againſt the guilty ſinner. 'Tis this made him ſo deſirous to put off the Sackcloth from his loins, and to ſhake the Aſhes from his head, becauſe he was to appear in the King's Court, he was to come into the preſence of the King of Heaven, and therefore he was ſo earneſt to waſh his hands, and ſhave his beard, cleanſe that defilement, and take out that engrain'd tincture, which ſin had ſtain'd his Soul with; ſo that having done all, he might be able to ſtand in ſo great and auguſt a preſence; Before which he apprehended he had received a ſharp and peremptory ſummons to appear. He prepares for this Trial, which the Meſſenger of death inform'd him was at hand; and therefore 'tis that with ſo much earneſtneſs

he sues for his pardon, before that great and terrible day of the Lord comes, that he seeketh to him betimes, and maketh supplication to the Almighty, that he would take away his iniquity.

4. Let it be now, because I am to sleep in the dust, [and there's nothing will make that bed easy besides it.] He must needs be scared with dreams, and terrified with the apprehension and horrour of an everlasting night: Or rather no dream at all, but a real truth, which awaken his desires, and put him upon that diligent inquisition and search after this Pearl of invaluable price. Some of the heathens seemed to slight death, nay some thought it a Present sent from the Gods to men; But those who have the best apprehension of it account this δῶρον ἄδωρον such a kind of gift which the wisest men will give Skin for Skin to avoid. But when this Monster appears in its Colours, drest up with sins which are of a Scarlet dye and crimson tincture, 'tis then very terrible to behold; A *Gorgon's* head is not to be compared to such a deaths head. And therefore this patient, and wise man being about to swallow this bitter Pill, desires the Lord to give

Psal. 38. 3. There is no rest in my bones because of my sin.

Qui Spatium vitæ extremum inter munera ponat naturæ. Juven.

give it him in this pleaſant Vehicle in the Text, without which it muſt prove very bitter in his belly, his bowels, his bowels, it would pain him at the very heart; being therefore ready to take his leave, how earneſtly did he deſire that αγιον φιλημα, that kiſs of Charity and love to his Soul in Chriſt Jeſus, a ſweeter than which could not be given, *viz.* The pardon of ſin. Suppoſe his bed he is now to take his laſt, his long ſleep in, ſhould be drawn in with tiſſue, the curtains of fine twined linnen, the covering of tapeſtry, and wrought with Gold. Suppoſe the body intomb'd in Marble; and that engraved with high ſwelling words of vanity, with many great and flattering Titles given to him when his maker hath deſtroyed him. What was *Thomas Becket* the better for being canonized at *Rome*, if he (as it was contended for in *Paris*) was condemned for rebelling againſt his Prince? It avails nothing to expire from a bed of down, if from thence it muſt paſs to a bed of flames. They ſay it was once the deſire of a great perſon, to have Muſick playing when his Soul was departing. How far it might oblige his ear I know not, to be ſure it could ſing no *requiem* to his Soul. There's none can ſay to that, Take thine eaſe, whilſt as a cart 'tis preſſed with the ſheaves of ſin. Sir *Ph. Si.*

The

The Fire which comes out of this Bramble, baffles all the Arts and Engines that can be brought to extinguiſh it. Nothing but that blood and water which iſſued from our Saviour's ſide, can allay the heat, or quench the violence of that flame. He that is ſtruck with the ſting of death, eſpecially when 'tis dipt in the poiſon of Aſps, the venom of ſin, finds as great torment as he that is wounded with a Scorpion: But this Oil which comes out of the Horn of Salvation, is the only Anodyne that can allay its ſmart. The dying the death of the righteous, and having his latter end like his, is the only thing (when we are ready to taſte of death) to make the bitterneſs of that Cup paſs from us.

They might ſay what they would to *Phineas*'s Wife, and tell her that a Child was Born, that ſhe was now ſafely delivered, her pains conſummated; but 'twas all in vain, the Ark of God was taken, and then they might ſtile the Child *Ichabod* for the glory was departed from *Iſrael*, and all her comfort with it. We ſpeak perhaps comfortably to a dying Perſon, but alas thoſe Lips drop deceit. We may lay Pillows under his Arm-pits, but he finds no eaſe, whilſt he lyes under the guilt and ſence of ſin, he ſtiles himſelf

himſelf *Ichabod*, his glory, his Soul is departing into that place where there never can be any future hope, or eſſay for Salvation. For the future expectation of the Hypocrite muſt for ever periſh, when God takes away his Soul. Job 8. 13. Job 27. 8.

Firſt, Pardon and forgiveneſs makes the paſſage out of this World eaſie and comfortable: Becauſe it ſpeaks [reconciliation to God by Chriſt.] And this makes (Oh thou departing Soul!) thy Bed in thy ſickneſs which is unto death. How can there be peace to an unpardoned Sinner, to whom the meſſage of death is a ſad Errand, a Warrant of Execution, Sealed in purſuance of that Sentence which is paſſed already? *In the day that thou eateſt thereof thou ſhalt die the death*; but forgiveneſs repeals this Sentence, and declares the Soul reconciled to God, and re-inſtated in his favour, that it may appear with joy and not with ſorrow in the preſence of the Lord; triumphing over death, and rejoicing in the very view and proſpect of the Grave. Death may take his Arrows out of his Quiver, and ſhoot at thee, but they ſhall fall on thy right hand, and on thy left; but ſhall never come near to hurt thee. A ſick and dying Perſon may take many Cordials made according to the Art

Art of the Apothecary; but alas miſerable comforts are they all, in compariſon of that refreſhment which comes from the preſence of the Lord by the pardon of ſin.

Acts 3.19.

2. Forgiveneſs makes death eaſie, becauſe [it ſecures us from the evil of it, and renders our paſſage ſafe into the Boſom of our Saviour.] It plucks out the ſting of it, ſo that a Child of God may play without danger upon the hole of that Aſp. What though this Lion and Bear lye in thy way to Heaven? yet they cannot prevent thy entrance into it. *What ſhall ſeparate from the love of God? ſhall life, ſhall death, ſhall principalities, ſhall powers?* No, they are all too weak, they ſhall bow, they muſt ſtoop before thee; *Thoſe whom the Lord hath juſtified, they ſhall be glorified.* This made *Job* therefore pray ſo earneſtly; becauſe this was the way to enſure his lading, now that he was ready to lanch into the Ocean of Eternity. And therefore being upon the brink of it, no wonder if he begs for that Anchor, which he knew would keep his Soul ſure and ſtedfaſt. He knew that the hand which blotted out his iniquity would write his name in the Book of Life. Till this Leproſie be cleanſed there's no coming nigh the Sanctuary, the Temple of the Lord, where

where the Lamb of God is the light of it. But he that hath received the *arrhabona*, the earneſt of the Spirit, hath his Everlaſting Welfare aſcertain'd, his Calling and Election enſured; which being the happy iſſue and product of it, is a moſt concluſive Argument of his Salvation, and that he was choſen before the World was laid, to be holy and blameleſs before him in love; this is the fruit of our juſtification to take away our ſin, that is the only Bar and *Obex* in our way to happineſs. Pardon takes this Mountain out of the way; yea, it ſecures our happineſs, and ſmooths or prepares the way thither, ſpeaking comfortably and plainly to us, holding us no longer in doubt, giving a fair Land-skip of Heaven, that *Canaan* that is above; it ſhews us all the Kingdoms of the World to come, with the glory of them; letting us to know that they are ours, that we are Chriſts, and Chriſt is Gods: Thus does forgiveneſs of ſin make a Death-bed eaſie to a departing Soul, which makes it then moſt of all to deſire it. As it is then of the higheſt import to it in ſweetning its (otherwiſe rough) paſſage out of this World.

5. Let it be now before I fall aſleep [leſt when I awake it be with ſorrow, and with *Dives* I lift up mine Eyes in Hell.] As if *Job* had

had said, O Lord do not so give thy beloved sleep, lest it prove the sleep of death, Eternal death; in which I cannot take rest through the vast and incommensurable duration. If my Tree falls thus, it will be fit for nothing but fuel for that Fire which never goes out. *Semel malè mortuus in æternum damnatus.* When I consider and chew upon thy Book, I find it a very bitter Roll, in which is written nothing but lamentation, mourning and woe against me. There's not one Prophesie of good concerning me.

Μάντι κακῶν ἐ πώποτέ μοι κρήγυον εἶπας
Αἰεί τοι τὰ κακὰ ἐστι φίλα φρεσὶ μαντεύεσθαι
Ἔθλον δ' ὐδε τι πω εἶπας ἔπος.

Every Prophet is to him that is under guilt as *Machaia* to *Ahab*, μάντις κακῶν, who speaks not one kind word to him, his darkness is so thick that it may be felt, so immixt and absolute that it admits not of the least allay or interval of light. Though his Eyes be held for ever waking, yet he can see nothing. For Eye hath not seen, nor Ear heard, neither hath it entred into the Heart of Man to conceive, how inexhaustible the treasures of divine wrath are, which are laid up in store for him, of which there's nothing

thing can be pleaded or expected in abatement. If the dipping of a Finger, nay, the tip of it, would but cool, though not quench (Oh unhappy Creature!) thy inflamed Tongue, it never will be granted. There's too great a gulph and diſtance betwixt thy God and thee, to expect Mercy ever to paſs over. No wonder then if the Sinner pleads ſo earneſtly, that this Cloud of his ſin may be diſperſt before his Sunſet, leſt it cauſe a total and perpetual Eclipſe. A Vail that can never be rent, though the Earth be removed, and the Heavens wound up as a ſcroll, ſo certain, ſo irreverſible will his doom be, if when he ſleeps in the duſt, his tranſgreſſion be not taken away, and his ſin pardoned. But wouldſt thou dwell in ſafety? wouldſt thou lie down in peace, and take thy reſt? this is that Spiritual Opiate that can only compoſe thee to ſuch a ſleep, and give thee ſuch a pleaſing ſlumber. But if the Soul now deſcends into the horrible Pit, with the load mentioned in the Text upon its back, it will be preſſed down and riſe no more, unleſs it be to condemnation, and to receive the recompence of its unrighteouſneſs which is meet. This made *Job* loth to ſtumble and fall now; ſo deſirous to get ſure footing, and a ſtedfaſt intereſt in him, the light of whoſe coun-

countenance can only diſſipate and ſcatter that thick darkneſs, which if it did not now ſhine upon him, he muſt be involved and wrapt in for ever: Guilt being that Mill-ſtone about the ſinners neck, that if he once deſcends into the grave with it, it ſinks him into the nethermoſt Hell: Oh! who'd not beg at ſuch a time as this to be delivered from that ſin, that weight which ſo powerfully beſets him? *Job* knew that the dregs of a full Cup were wrung out for him, unleſs he taſted of that pardoning love and mercy, which he as paſſionately thirſted after, as the Hart panted after the water-brooks. In a word, Let it be now (might *Job* ſay) becauſe I am ready to ſleep in the duſt, to put on grave-clothes; but loth I am when I awake to ſee my ſelf clad in flames. He was in a ſtreight, having a deſire to be diſſolved; but willing ſo to part with this world, that he might meet his Saviour in the next: For which he knew there was no other way than this, to have his iniquity taken away; for, were he clad with thoſe garments ſpotted with the fleſh, it might juſtly cauſe him to ſhun his company; yea to leave his Soul in Hell, and ſuffer him to ſee everlaſting deſtruction.

6. Let it be now forgiven, becauſe it will be a great ſupport to my weak nature, which

is

is juſt entring into a conflict with its worſt of Enemies, Death and Satan; and that's no eaſie Conteſt: He's in no ſmall Agony that is labouring for life, that is ſtrugling with his laſt Enemy the Grave. This was that which turned away the face of his Anointed (*Hezekiah* I mean) towards the wall, and cauſed him to weep ſore. And well he might;

1. Becauſe it diſſolves that ligament and tye, which is betwixt two near and intimate Friends, the Body and Soul: And there will be mourning when they ſee that knot untying by which they are ſo faſt bound and married to each other: Which ſilver Cord (*Job* thought) was looſing, as to him, which made him mourn and weep ſore in the night; but if it pleaſed God to pardon his ſin, this (and nothing but this) could wipe his eyes dry. The tears which the Brethren ſhed, fell with that force upon St. *Paul*, that they broke his heart, upon no other account, but becauſe they ſhould ſee his face no more. The Body and Soul are near Relations, and intimate Friends; they take ſweet counſel together, and often go to the Houſe of God in company, ſacrificing themſelves to the Lord as a reaſonable ſervice: They have a mutual ſympathy and fellow-feeling of each others miſery; the finger of the body akes not, but

the ſoul is ſenſible of it: And if the ſpirit be afflicted, where's the body that burns not? like *Harpocrites*'s Twins, they laugh and cry together. They are in life lovely, and pleaſant in each others eyes; and therefore it cannot but be highly afflictive to conſider that in death they muſt be divided; for this the eye frequently runs down with tears, and the apple of it ceaſeth not.

2. Nor was this the only bitter ingredient in the Cup, which was ſeemingly at the lip of this patient man, and ſo hard for nature to gulp down. But many other alterations, which it much abhors, muſt be endured; the leaſe of his life being about to expire. That goodly Fabrick which he had ſo long inhabited, muſt be exchanged, for no other manſion than a grave. He that fed on the fineſt of the Wheat, and ate the good of the Land, muſt now, like the Serpent, lie and lick the duſt; which was to be his bed and board too, for here he muſt lie down, which might well make him water his Couch with his tears, and to mourn ſore in the night. The Wife of his boſom, which was given him for his comfort and converſe, (who undoubtedly had no ſmall kindneſs for him, though ſhe miſtook in her advice

Fear, and the pit, and the ſnare are upon thee, Oh Inhabitant of the Earth! Iſa. 24. 17.

advice to him) he muſt now ſhake hands with, and take of her an everlaſting farewel. *Linquenda tellus, & domus, & placens uxor, &c.* No wonder then if he deſires ſomething to ſweeten and allay the Acrimony of the Wormwood and the Gall, which were the portion of his preſent Cup. He ſaw that he was ready to receive his fatal blow; the hand of the Lord was lift up againſt him, ready to give him his deaths wound, which made him ſo fervently deſire to have his pardon iſſue out with healing in its wings: He was full of ſmart, and great pain was upon him, yea the ſorrows of death encompaſſed him, and the pains of Hell took hold upon him: This made his tears run down like a River, in which he was well-nigh drowned, ready to be ſwallowed up in the bottomleſs Pit of deſtruction, which made him call out with ſo much ſpiritual paſſion, *Maſter, ſave me, or I periſh.* Take away mine iniquity, for I am ready to ſleep in the duſt, and then I ſhall be ſought for, but ſhall not be found. Theſe, with ſeveral other ſparks which might be reaſonably ſtruck from this conſideration of his departure, might well add to the heat of that fire in which he was grievouſly tormented. Nor could any thing now ſatisfie him, or aſſwage the miſery and ſadneſs of

his condition, but this water of life here described, *viz.* the forgiveness of sin. And when could he have a greater thirst upon him for the waters of this Well of Salvation, than at such a time when he was scorcht with such an heat as caused his moisture to be no other than the drought of Summer? This makes the Servant of God to petition him in the stile that the Jews did *Artaxerxes* the great King. Unto *Artaxerxes* the King thy Servants the men on this side the River, *and at such a time.* Now it is, that neither Sun, Moon, nor Stars, appear to a poor afflicted creature, but 'tis tossed with those various storms which death raiseth in the Soul, when all hopes of deliverance from the hand of that Enemy is taken away, finding that it cannot stand, it will be very desirous *honestè decumbere*, so to fall, so to die, that it may by any means attain to the Resurrection of the dead. From this root of bitterness spring up many branches, Briars, under which the Soul sits with very little delight; nay here upon this Willow it hangs its Harp, not knowing how to sing the song of the Lord, now 'tis passing into a strange Land, a Land of forgetfulness. Now it feels a πλεθρύπτιν, a *defluvium pennarum*, its crest falls, and spirits sink, and no marvel

Ezra 4. 11.

Col. 3. 11.

marvel when this Dove, this undefiled of the Lord is full of ſick Feathers; And being in this fainting yielding condition, it may very well cry out, Stay me with Flagons, comfort me with apples, grant me pardon and forgiveneſs, for I am ſick even to death.

3. I might add that this is a time of ſtrong Temptations, it is called the day of Temptation. Now *Satan* hath taken his fan into his hand, and deſires to winnow us as wheat. 'Tis no wonder then if with the greater earneſtneſs we intreat that the Lord would take away our Chaff, and purge our ſin, that we may the leſs dread the Whirlwind, which the Prince of the power of the air ſhall then raiſe, *Satan* well knows that if he can but now prevail, he ſhall ſling the Soul as out of the middle of a ſling. Now is this roaring Lyon moſt greedy of his prey, becauſe he knoweth he hath but a ſhort time to caſt his temptations, and throw his fiery darts at the Soul. If once it hath entred the Gates of the new *Jeruſalem*, the old Serpent the Devil cannot reach him with his ſting. When he hath buckled on the helmet of Salvation, this Father of perdition cannot hurt him. But if he can now wound him, he knows there can be no future cure if he

1 Sam. 25. 19.

can caſt him down, now that he is deſcending into the grave, he ſhall be ſure hereafter to find him in the bottomleſs Pit. This makes him ſummons all his power, and diſcharge all the Vollies of his temptations at him, and if poſſible, to ruine Body and Soul, and ſmite them both to the very heart. For this cauſe do the Servants of the Lord lift up their voices like a Trumpet, cry aloud for the help of the Lord againſt the mighty, that though they fall by the ſtroke of death, yet that they may riſe again. And though this be a time when *Satan* deſigns his ſtrongeſt attempts upon the brethren, yet that when he hath done all, they may be able in that day to ſtand.

7. Further this is a more ſpecial time of asking; [Becauſe this is a peculiar and ſpecial time and ſeaſon which the Lord chooſeth of ſhewing mercy.] He delights to be ſeen in the mount, to diſcover himſelf to us when we are in *Bochim*, this Valley of tears. When the Prince of Darkneſs hath doubled the miſts, and raiſed thick Clouds upon the Conſcience; When he gives not only a ſight of Death and Grave, but of Hell alſo, and tells the dying Perſon that all theſe things muſt be his, becauſe he hath fallen down and worſhipt him. Then the Sun of righteouſneſs ariſeth

ariſeth and exhaleth theſe vapours, ſcatters theſe Clouds; ſuch is the Wiſdom and Love of God, that he not only tempers his mercies to the nature and quality of our miſeries, but he ſuits them to the time of our extremities. When the Apoſtles feet were faſt in the Stocks then the Angel came, and knockt off their Chains, and ſet them at liberty, when they were thus faſt bound in Miſery and Iron. Will not every one then call upon the Lord at ſuch a time as this is? Hiſtorians ſay that there's a Temple near *Jupiter Hammon*, whoſe water at noon time is coldeſt ('tis like Snow in harveſt,' as *Solomon* ſpeaks, to allay and temper the extremity of heat) and at midnight when the Shadows of the evening are cooleſt, 'tis then hotteſt. So are the refreſhments which come from the preſence of the the Lord ſuited and ſeaſoned to the time and nature of our extremities. We need not inquire why ſo many flockt to the pool, that the poor lame man could not for many years find interval enough to ſlip in for a cure. When the Angel came and gave the water a power of healing, at ſuch a time will every wiſe man make his application. So great is the conſideration and compaſſion of our God as to make our great extremities ſeaſons of ſalvation and deliverance. When he ſees his

people ſtand without till their heads be wet with the drops, and their hairs with the dew of the night, and tears of repentance, then he opens the everlaſting Gates of heaven, that theſe Sons of the King of glory may enter in.

This then being the time when the Lord is often pleaſed to break the bread of life and comfort to the Soul, 'tis no wonder if now they open their mouths wide in prayer, and ſupplication, that they may be filled.

I hope none will make that bad uſe of this doctrine, and ſo far miſimprove it, as to procraſtinate and delay to work out their Salvation till the laſt hour, nor awaken themſelves to repentance till they are juſt ready to ſleep in the duſt; ſome ſpiders perhaps there are which will ſuck venom from this flower, making their eyes evil becauſe God's is good, and caſt a favourable aſpect upon them, when they are under the greateſt ſtreights and extremities, that can befal them. But never certainly was folly bound up in a more compact bundle, in the heart of a fool, than this. Whether the ſtrong cries of a dying ſinner enter into the ears of the Almighty, or whether the door of Salvation will open at the laſt knocks of a departing wretch, that has deferred and put off, to the utmoſt period of his

his life, his chiefeſt work; That till the bell paſs, never thinks of his own, into another world, I ſhall not conclude peremptorily againſt him. I know the compaſſion and love of God, is immenſe and bottomleſs, but his Wiſdom, Juſtice and Holineſs are perfections of the ſame Meaſure and Dimenſions. So that if I knew a more effectual way to defeat and baffle their expectancies of Heaven, and lay their hopes together with their bodies in the duſt, I would acquaint them with it. Not that I am willing to drive the dying penitent into a deſponding State and condition at the laſt, that he ſhould yield up his hope and Soul together; ſo neither would I encourage any to think, that he that lives *Balaam*'s life, ſhall die the death of the righteous, or that his latter end ſhall be like his, for he that works hardeſt in the Lords Vineyard is in the beſt poſture to lye down in peace, and take his reſt, when the night of death comes. God in wiſdom oftentimes ſtops the wheels of his Chariots and makes them late in coming to bring deliverance. He knows that the Cup of Salvation will ſavour beſt, when the Soul is pincht with the greateſt thirſt. When the *Iſraelites* were upon the brink of the Sea, and could go no further, then God commanded them to ſtand ſtill and ſee his Salvation.

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When they could no way eſcape, then God ſuffered not the wicked to approach to hurt them. When St. *Stephens* clay Cottage was battering about his ears, then he called upon the Lord, who opened Heaven, and ſhewed him the heavenly manſions, & himſelf at the right hand of God. The Lord will hear his people in ſuch an acceptable time as this is, and therefore now they call upon him. Now *Job* begged in his great extremity when he was ready to go down into the pit, deſcending into the grave, that God would take away his tranſgreſſion and pardon his ſin, *Pſal.* 69. 13: But as for me, oh Lord, my prayer is unto thee, in an acceptable time; Oh God in the multitude of thy mercies hear me, *&c.* This the Prophet *Iſaiah* juſtified by the actual diſpenſations of Gods providence. Thus ſaith the Lord, In an acceptable time I have heard thee, and in the day of Salvation I have helped thee. The day of extremity is the accepted time, the day which the Lord hath made to bring Salvation.

Iſa. 49. 8.

Application.

1. If then it be wiſdom to apply to God for pardon and forgiveneſs, then we learn [to whom

whom our prayers upon that account are to be directed,] that is, to the Lord who is the perſon grieved. There is a queſtion that makes this none at all; For who can forgive ſins but one, and that's God? The wiſdom as well as patience of *Job* appears in bringing his bucket to this fountain for the water of life. The *Roman* Church ſends us with our pitchers to broken Ciſterns for it, the Miniſters of their Church, whereas at moſt they are but Heralds to ſound the Trumpet of the Goſpel, and to publiſh abſolution upon the terms, it pleaſed God to grant it. The holy Father ſaith well, 'tis *per modum declarantis*, not *per viam impertientis*, for 'tis he that pardoneth and abſolveth all thoſe who truly repent. Sometimes to the Saints, and to invoke them to pardon our iniquity, and to take away our ſin; But to which of the Saints did this good man turn him?

Active proximè & inſtrumentaliter efficit gratiam juſtificationis. Bellar. de Sacrament.

1. To the Miniſters of the Church.

2. To the Saints.

Obj. *But they ſay this is a ſcandal caſt upon them, and their Church, and that they only pray to Saints as one friend to another to entreat God for them.*

R. Were this truth, yet there's not the ſame reaſon as might be eaſily made appear; were

were controverſy the preſent deſign. But it may be wondered, they ſhould take Sanctuary in ſo weak a refuge; whilſt matter of fact proves ſo plainly the contrary. Is not the holy and bleſſed Virgin *Mary* directly invocated in the *Roman* Breviary ſet forth and authorized by ſeveral Popes, where her diſciples are taught to pray in theſe words, *viz.* Vouchſafe to let me praiſe thee, oh holy Virgin, and give me ſtrength againſt thine enemies. This is not, pray to God the Son or Father to give me ſtrength. And in the Hymn often uſed in her Office, ſhe is called not only the Gate of Heaven, but ſhe's intreated to looſe the bonds of the guilty, and give light to the blind. In the Maſs book printed at *Paris*, 1634. She is praid to Command her Son *jure matris imperare redemptori*, now to ſay this is no more than to deſire one to pray to God for him, is oppoſed to common ſenſe. For ſhould I deſire a friend or good man to pardon my ſin, and to take away my tranſgreſſion or to give me aſſiſtance of divine grace, it would ſcarce by themſelves (I think by none who underſtand common ſenſe.) be ſo interpreted.

Benaventure in his Crown hath theſe words; *Oh Empreſs, our kind Lady, by authority of a Mother command thy moſt Beloved Son*, &c. In Pſal. 35. *His Pſalter hath theſe words, Incline the Countenance of God upon us. Compel him to have mercy upon us.*

Obj.

Obj. *They ſay the goodneſs of God ſhines forth in them, and therefore they are to be invocated.*

R. Were the Suppoſition true, yet 'twill ſcarce be a concluſive Argument of their Invocation. But 'tis to be feared that all whom they ſay do ſhine with holineſs, are not the Children of Light; Some of them by themſelves have been thought no better than Sons of darkneſs. *Queſtio Pariſiis inter Magiſtros ventilata fuit, utrum damnatus an ſalvatus eſſet ille Thomas. Dixerat Rogerius Normannus fuiſſe illum morte ac damnatione dignum, quod contumax eſſet in Dei miniſtrum Regem Cæſar. Monach.* Speaking of St. *Thomas* of *Canterbury*, who, an hundred years after he was Canonized at *Rome* for a Saint, was, by the *Sorboniſts*, rather concluded to be in Hell for the ſin of Rebellion againſt his Prince: And to pray to ſuch for pardon of ſin, who are labouring under the guilt and eternal puniſhment of their own, (to ſayno worſe) is an ill directed Devotion. *Philip Nereus* tells us, that he ſaw the face of *Ignatius Loiola*, founder of the Jeſuits Order, ſhine with a glory about it, which is mentioned in the *Roman* Breviary, and read among the Leſſons. If the Story be true, ſome think we may adn it him to be invocated, yea and him that founded their City too: Whilſt *Julius Proclus* may be

be as easily credited, who averred upon Oath, that he saw *Romulus* their first King ascending with glory into Heaven, who called to him in his passage, and told him he was a God, and that he would be worship'd by the name of * *Quirinus*. The same thing was sworn in the Senate, of *Drusilla* and *Claudius Cæsar*, by one of that Nation, as *Seneca* saith. Which of these Stories hath most of truth in them, I leave them to judge; they come all from *Rome*, whose foundation, as it was laid in blood, *Fraterno primi maduerunt sanguine muri*; so hath the walls and battlements of it been built up with lyes and falshoods, as with untempered Mortar.

* *Lud. viv. ad lib. 2. cap. 25. Aug. de Civ. Dei, ac in lib. 3. c. 15.*

But let us and our houses seek the Lord, and with confidence come before the Throne of Grace, to which there is a new and living way consecrated by the Blood of Christ, through which we may have access with boldness to it. We need not make these *Blastus*'s our friends; we may have an immediate admission to the Father of Spirits that we may live. Let us directly apply to this fountain of living waters; we need not go to narrower; yea, what will prove broken Cisterns to them that carry their Buckets thither. We need not say, *Sancte Abrahame, ora*

pro

pro nobis, when we have a greater than *Abraham* to go to, who is the Well of Life it ſelf. Hither it was that the Prophet *Iſaiah* carried his Pitcher, when he was athirſt for the living God, *Iſa.* 64. 9. *Be not wroth very ſore, Oh Lord! neither remember iniquity for ever: Behold, we beſeech thee, we are all thy people.* This is a diſtemper which * no hand but his can heal; all beſides himſelf are Phyſicians of no value; there's no Balm but what comes from *Gilead*; no Oil of gladneſs but what diſtils out of the Horn of Salvation. The Grace of God only is the Womb that bears us, and the Paps which give us ſuck, the Breaſts from whence we can only draw the ſincere Milk *Job* thirſted after; to wit. forgiveneſs and pardon. This is the hand which planted it, and 'tis that only which can prune and ingraft us into the true Vine, and make us natural Branches, that we may become Plants of Righteouſneſs, and Trees of Life in the Paradice of God. Indeed whither ſhould we go? he only hath the words of eternal life. He, even he it is that blots out iniquity, tranſgreſſion and ſin, for his own Name ſake. He can

* *Ferus* that learned and honeſt Monk was of this mind; *Non quod homo propriè remittit peccatum, ſed quod oſtendat ac certificet à Deo remiſſum*: But this expreſſion was too honeſt to eſcape their Expurgatory Sieve. *Uſher* againſt *Mall.*

can do it, he will do it. He is a Fountain neither dried up, nor sealed up. When *Jacob* heard there was Corn in *Egypt*, he dispatcht his Sons for a supply, that he and his family might not perish. There is Corn, and 'tis the finest of the Wheat, whereof the Bread of Life is made; the Lord is a Store-house, a Treasury of Wisdom and Love; he is *populi Christiani horreum*: If we carry our Sacks thither, be they never so wide, he will fill them, nay and put our Money in the mouths of them too, for he sells it without Money and without price, so that it is better cheap to go to Heaven than *Rome* for a pardon: whose Maxim is, No Penny, no *Pater noster*; no small Argument to prove the imprudence of those who suck at this wrong Breast; as also the arrogance of those who think this great gift of the Spirit may be procured by Money; for I know not what sin can't be pardoned, (as they pretend) if it be paid for. So profitable are Riches in the day of wrath, that 'tis an hard matter for a rich man not to enter into Heaven, or if he gains this world, not to have sufficient to give in exchange for his Soul. As for any work of the Spirit upon the Soul in point of reformation, little will serve, if the Doctrine of their Church be true. The Council of *Trent* hath delivered it for

Gospel,

Goſpel, that contrition is ſufficient to obtain forgiveneſs, that is, a ſorrow for ſin. But leſt ſhe ſhould in that reſpect bind too heavy a burthen upon the back of her Proſelytes, ſhe hath changed it for one that may be moved with the tip of a finger, by granting that attrition, which is only a ſorrow or ſlaviſh fear of puniſhment, ſhall do the work, ſo that there be few which come, provided they come not empty, but ſhall go laden away with Indulgences and Abſolution, as large as they deſire, or rather as they can give. The Scripture teacheth us another Doctrine, that 'tis not ſo eaſy a thing to have iniquity pardoned, and ſin forgiven; Unleſs we repent we ſhall all likewiſe periſh, and except a man be regenerate and born again, he cannot enter into the Kingdom of Heaven. So that to give pardon upon other terms, than God propounds it, is at beſt an holy cheat, with which theſe men uſe to cozen their conſitents of their money. And it were well if not of their Souls too, who relying upon theſe Mountebanks for a cure of their ſpiritual diſeaſes, they go down alive into the pit, and alas! find not the deceit, till 'tis too late, to prevent the miſery and miſchief of the impoſture. The Lord tells us

Job. 36. 12.

But if they obey not they ſhall periſh, &c.

by his Prophet, *Jer.* 15. 19, If thou ſeparate the precious from the vile, then thou ſhalt be as my mouth, otherwiſe 'tis a mouth that ſpeaketh lies. This Doctrine hath conduced much to the treaſury of the Church in ſome ſenſe; but how little it hath availed, thoſe who have treaſured up wrath againſt the day of wrath, (and whom their Indulgences have coſt dear) may too late underſtand, and that they have given their money for that which is no bread. This is one of thoſe devices of *Satan*, of which ſo great a part of the World is and will be ignorant, *ſed qui vult decipi decipiatur.* Yet I pray God they may repent, that the thoughts of their hearts may be forgiven them, who thus turn godlineſs into gain, or that deceive the people, poſſeſſing them that the gift of the holy Spirit is thus to be purchaſed. Theſe Romiſh factors may eaſe the people of their wealth, but never of the burthen of their ſins, nor convey the pardon of them, the thing they ſo often bargain for. And yet how are her Merchants grown rich? Who have had ſo advantagious a Traffick, and commerce in the abundance of theſe delicacies. But the day of this great City *Babylon*, (that is ſpiritually called *Sodom*, to which ſo many in this day of temptation are apt to look

Rev. 18. 3.

look back) is coming, of whom the Lord hath ſaid, That how much ſhe hath glorified her ſelf, and lived deliciouſly, ſo much torment and ſorrow will he give her, and if we deſire not to ſhare in her Plagues, let us not go Partner with her in her ſins, which, though ſhe hath power to commit, ſhe hath none to pardon. And therefore when her Children ſhall cry to her, as this patient man in the Text, Why doeſt thou not pardon my tranſgreſſion? *&c.* She may reply as the King of *Samaria* to the woman in the time of the great Famine, If the Lord doth not help thee, whence ſhould I? Which *Adrian* the ſixth a Pope, a Poet of their own did acknowledge, that the moſt approved were of the mind that the Keys of the Prieſthood did not extend to the remiſſion of the fault. Then they thought their larther could not take out this ſtain. When this power of forgiveneſs was queſtioned by the Jews in Relation to our Saviour, he put the ignorance of thoſe fooliſh and malicious men to ſilence by working a miracle in cauſing the lame man to ariſe, to take up his bed and walk: Whether is it eaſier to ſay, Thy ſins be forgiven thee? *&c.* It were to be wiſht (for the ſake of many poor deluded Souls who have taken their wares off the hands of theſe Merchants

Rev. 18. 7.

of the Earth at any rate upon their word) that they would not pretend to the former, till they can maintain and justify it by the latter. In the mean time let who will seek to the God on the other side of the flood, to the God of the *Amorites* for pardon. Let me and my house serve the Lord, treading in *Jobs* steps and seeking to him to pardon our transgressions, and to take away our iniquities, before we sleep in the dust.

2. If pardon of sin be so desirable; [Then sure sin is an evil and bittter thing.] Otherwise *Job* had abated something of that zeal he here expresseth to be discharged both from the guilt and punishment of it, which speaketh it to be an evil of a double hatch, a stain of a Crimson dye, and Scarlet tincture, when the tears of repentance, (with which its expiation is so often sought for) find it so hard to purge. It can be no less than the poyson of Asps, which puts all the humours, I mean the powers and passions of the Soul into an ebullition and ferment. So strong was this sinful Diaphoretick as it caused our Saviour to sweat drops of blood. The strong cries will tell you that where ever sin is formed a Cockatrice is bred, the unutterable groans, those στεναγμοὶ ἀλάλητοι, the Apostle mentions, are sufficiently expressive, that 'tis an evil and a bitter

bitter thing. By the ſad effects *Niobe* took the meaſure of the cauſe, who by her ſharp cries ſhews that ſin was like a two Edged Sword, which had divided betwixt the very Joints and Marrow.

Diſcite, mortales, quid ſit turgeſcere faſtu,
Et quid ſit magnos poſthabuiſſe deos.

We need not inquire why every Mariner in the Ship called upon his God, tugged the Oars, plyed the Sails, managed the Tackling, when there was a *Jonas* in the ſides of the Veſſel, a great ſinner who had deſpiſed the Commands of the Lord, and fled from his preſence, was ſleeping in the Ship. This was that which raiſed the Storm, troubled the Sea. Is the penitent (as they were whom St. *Peter* told they had ſlain the Lord of life) Prickt at the heart? 'Tis eaſy to gueſs then how ſharp a Point this dagger hath. Is he in great diſtreſs? Is that accompliſht upon him which the Prophet ſpeaks of? Is he filled with bitterneſs, and made drunk with wormwood, that he Staggers and Reels to and fro like a drunken man? Is he at his wits end? (The certain effect of drinking down Iniquity like water.) Doth his belly ſwell, and his thigh rot? We may

Lam. 3. 15.

ſee then the nature, the intoxicating, the corroding faculty of theſe Waters of jealouſie. *David* ſaith, his bones were broken, that he roar'd by reaſon of the diſquietneſs of his Soul. Other waters waſh the ſurface, ſeldom wetting beyond the Skin. But theſe he complains entred into his very Soul. Nor are they water only, but fire too, otherwiſe theſe words had never burſt out (from lips which upon ſo high provocations to impatience ſinned not, nor charged God fooliſhly) [Why doſt thou not pardon my tranſgreſſion?] The Prophet complains that God had made his Chain heavy, but ſure the Chains of darkneſs are of an exceeding weight; had it been any thing elſe, *Job* could have born it. But this ſinks his Soul to the nethermoſt pit. We may conclude that the evil of ſin is more than other evils, the fowleſt among ten thouſands; when the penitent ſo chargeth the Lord (with due reverence may we ſpeak of him) to take it away; 'Tis no hard matter to make an eſtimate of the cauſe by thoſe ſad Effects, and Influence it hath upon the Spirit. Is thy reſt, are thy teeth broken? This is that gravel which hath done it. Doſt thou ſit in aſhes? thou mayſt thank thy ſin which

Lam. 3. 16.

which turns thy beauty into burning. Had not *Hannah* accounted it a great reproach and curſe to go Childleſs, ſhe had never prayed in the bitterneſs of her Spirit for a Son: Nor *Rachel* refuſed to be comforted becauſe her's were not. But yet ſin is an evil incomparably beyond it. For *Satan* had pluckt down, or up, which you will, thoſe Olive branches which grew about *Jobs* Table, upon which no doubt much of his comfort was built, he ſtryed his neſt, and daſht his brood againſt the Stones. But for that he opened not his mouth; but is contented to go naked of that enjoyment out of the World, ſeeing God had ſtript him of it; But his tranſgreſſion was worſe than the Devil; *that* made him go Childleſs, *this* would make him go Fatherleſs. You need not ask him what he ails, that he ſo inveys againſt it. He cries and pleads earneſtly againſt it, for it had, or would take away his God from him. No wonder he is ſo afraid of it, for it's that which not only deſtroys the Body, but ſinks and implunges both Body and Soul in Hell for ever. Had it not been an inveterate diſeaſe, *Job* would not with ſo much diligence made uſe of this remedy, had it not been a conſtant running and Bloody Iſſue, he would not have ſpent ſo many prayers, yea all the ſubſtance of his zeal upon this Spiritual

Physitian. Hence we conclude the pain and anguish of his Soul was continual, he saith he had not time to swallow down his spittle. He was wrapt in so dark a Cloud that he had not the least lucid interval. His sorrow haunted him every morning, every moment, his life was a constant series of sadness and sorrow. Like the *Periscii*, who have *umbram circunditam*, so the Lord had hedged him in on every side, there was not one avenue left for his escape. If he eats his sorrow, imbitters every thing upon his Palate; If he drinks his Tears are mingled with it, his Cup is filled with the Wine of astonishment. If he awakes, to be sure his distractions slumber not. If he sleeps, terrors and dreams affright him. Had it not been a very bitter Cup, *Job* would not have prayed the Father so earnestly to have it pass from him. To conclude, is Heaven so sollicited with petitions, prest with such passionate and pathetick importunities, by reason of it? Are these the events and issues of that configuration and aspect *Job* was under? 'tis no hard matter then to divine how mischievous and malevolent a planet Sin is.

Thou scarest me with dreams, Job 7. 14.

3. If Forgiveness and Pardon be so desirable, and deserves so strict an inquiry after it,

it, eſpecially at laſt; [How unaccountable then is the folly of evil men, whoſe lives are nothing but a ſupine neglect, or wilful contempt of this their everlaſting intereſt:] Eſteeming the recompence of their iniquity which is meet, nothing but a bug-bear to fright fools, and Propoſitions of future happineſs, a lap to dandle and delude the more Melancholy and Penſive ſort of men in. Theſe by their pretended Philoſophy and vain deceit have ſo far impoſed upon themſelves that if all this were true, and the preſent world the only place of enjoyment, they could not make greater proviſions for the fleſh and leſs for eternity: Uſing or abuſing rather the higheſt efforts and actings of their underſtanding, to baffle their moſt rational ſentiments, and diſcharge themſelves of their reaſonable Service. Such are the Monſters and Beaſts that periſh, which this age hath produced, ſpawned they are from the old Serpent; And by it to that degree envenomed, that 'tis hard to imagine how it can bring forth a more viperous brood: Or more profligate concerning the faith. Theſe are thoſe *Leviathans* that ſport themſelves in the waters of iniquity, never conſidering that the Almighty hath an arrow in his quiver, that can ſmite them to the heart, though they

1. Neglect.

they have Scales of Braſs; What was the language of the old world, is the practice of the new, *Let us eat and drink, for to morrow we ſhall die*. And for that they ne're concern themſelves. They take counſel, ſaith the Lord, but not of me. The Poet is their Oracle; *Quid ſit futurum cras fuge quærere*; Sufficient for a day is the evil thereof. The inſtances of preſent wrath; The evidences of future puniſhments, move them not. With *Gallio* they care for none of theſe things. The harms of others make them not afraid. Nor does the beſom which hath ſwept them away, warn them. If conſcience at any time awake, and tell them, that the furnace is heat ſeven times hotter than any they ever felt: They are ready to ſay, We are not careful to anſwer thee concerning this thing: If we be not delivered yet, (It being no preſent incumbent evil) we deſire not to anticipate the torment of it. Though conſcience cries and lifts up its voice like a Trumpet, it will not awaken them. Nor the token of divine vengeance upon others move them to have mercy upon themſelves. They are as reſolute in the courſe of ſin, as thoſe St. *John* mentions, *Rev.* 9. 20. *And the reſt of the men, which were not killed by theſe plagues, repented not of the works of their hands.* But thus it is even when ruin hangs

over

over the heads of men, when it is in *extremâ tegulâ*, when the Kingdom of darkneſs is at hand, at the very door, even then are they drawing that vail over their eyes, that πνεῦμα καλαυρύξεως, as the Scripture phraſeth it, ſo clouding their eyes that they cannot, they will not ſee it. The day of the Lord, death and the grave are ſtealing upon us, but they conſider it not. They eat, they drink, they buy, they ſell, they marry and are given in marriage: Yea they drink Wine in bowles, ſaying, To day ſhall be as Yeſterday, and much more abundantly; They ſtretch themſelves upon their beds of Ivory, where they fold their hands to ſleep, but never dream of that flood which is coming upon them, that will inevitably ſweep them away. The reproof that *Agamemnon* received from *Jupiter* in a dream, may ſerve to awake a ſleepy, careleſs ſinner; Εὕδεις Ἀτρέος υἱὲ, δὲ χρὴ παννύχιον εὕδειν, Βυληφόρον ἄνδρα, ᾧ τε τόσσα μέμηλε; *Hom. Il. lib 2.* Canſt thou ſleep who haſt ſo great things to take care of? Oh ariſe! awake thou that ſleepeſt, and ſhake thy ſelf, the Philiſtines are upon thee; Thy ſins, thy tranſgreſſions are ready to deſtroy thee. I may ſay, as he ſaid in another caſe, Διὸς δέ τοι ἄγγελός εἰμι. I am the Lords meſſenger to thee. Now perhaps thou ſitteſt in thy

thy houſe of *Cedar*, marking well the battlements, and telling the Pillars thereof, whereas the Cottage to which thou art a more immediate Tenant, is but of Clay, and its foundation in the duſt, which Fabrick will ſoon be laid low and levelled, but makeſt no proviſion for an houſe not made with hands. Thou art perhaps involved in the pleaſures of this world, but never troubleſt thy ſelf for the concerns of another. All thy ambition is to make thy way broad, and path ſmooth, but never thinkeſt whither it leads, or to what it tends. Now every knee bows to thee, and every one ſaith All hail, thou art perhaps careſſed and complemented by thy Dependants and Sycophants; But enquireſt not how thou art like to ſtand, before him who is the judge of all the Earth, and that will do right. Now thou art cloathed in purple, thou feedeſt and fareſt deliciouſly every day, whilſt thou art but Fitting or Fatting up thy ſelf for the Slaughter. What's he better than a mad man that Gilds his Deck, enlargeth and advanceth his Sails on high, but never inſpects the Hull, nor whether his bottom be ſafe. Thou art the man who beareſt thy ſelf upon the fawnings and flatteries of others who it may be by reaſon of thy power are afraid of *thee*, or of *thoſe* who (for their own advantage) ſeek

ſeek to pleaſe thee; And thus, oh thou vain man, thou rideſt upon the Wings of the wind, the Air and Applauſe of men, not conſidering how ſoon thou maiſt be becalm'd, let down and dropt upon the Earth, it may be into it. So low will thy fall be when thou ſleepeſt in the duſt, but now (alas) thou dreameſt not of it.

But there is an higher ſtep in this Scale; *viz.* [the contempt] of God's mercy and pardoning grace, by thoſe fools which make a mock of ſin, who would, if it were poſſible, turn the glory of the Goſpel into ſhame; theſe are they which make a Trade of ſin, ſtriving to be Artiſts in the myſtery of iniquity, being ambitious to ſhew their skill in wickedneſs, and to be accounted *Virtuoſi* in that helliſh Art. Theſe are they who are induſtrious to heap up to themſelves wrath againſt the day of wrath. And, as if they could not be ſufficiently miſerable, defie, yea deny the Almighty; as if the eternal and exceeding weight of miſery were too light, unleſs they urge Heaven to add its utmoſt: And theſe muſt go for only men of Reaſon, the great *Archimagos* and Maſters of Philoſophy; 'tis becauſe they are Artiſts in wickedneſs, the inventers of rare, and hitherto unheard of ways and methods of ſinning hid

2. Contempt.

hid from Ages; eſpecially with that unaccountable boldneſs, finding out means ſo to caſe-harden their hearts, that the ſtrongeſt knocking of a Goſpel-Miniſtry will make no impreſſion; who have hammered their brows of Braſs to that obduracy, that there's little hopes of bending the ſtiff necks of ſuch bold and profligate offenders, who fear not to laugh at a Deity, to make Ballads of Religion, and out of pretended wit and bravery, turn Scripture into drollery, rendring the moſt ſerious practice of holineſs the ſubject of their deſpite and railery. *Woe is me, I am become like a broken Veſſel, for I have heard their blaſphemy.* When we come upon St. *John*'s Errand, ſaying, *Repent, for the Kingdom of Heaven is at hand*; they laugh at our Meſſage, and account us bablers for diſcourſing upon ſo impertinent a ſubject. Their language is, *Depart from us, for we deſire not the knowledge of theſe things.* Theſe are men often full of new Wine, and ſo drunk with the Cup of their Abominations, that they eſteem *them* no better, who reaſon with them concerning Righteouſneſs and Judgment to come. Tell them that the day of the Lord is at hand, that 'tis ſtealing upon them as a Thief in the night; and we are accounted as troublers of *Iſrael*, that are come to rob them of

Pſal. 31. 14.

of their delights, which have dealt far more treacherouſly and felonioufly with them, for they have ſtole away their hearts, and deceived them of that better part, which no way elſe could be taken from them. Theſe are a bold, Atheiſtical, Gigantick brood of ſcoffers, walking after their own luſts, ſaying, Where is this God of Judgment, that we ſhould ſeek thus after him for pardon and forgiveneſs? let him make ſpeed and haſten it, that we may ſee it. *Where is the promiſe of his coming? ſince the Fathers fell aſleep, all things continue as they were.* 'Tis not my preſent Province to take up the Gantlets againſt theſe men of pretended reaſon, but leave them to fight under the banner of their own deluſions till future Judgment, and inevitable Experience prove irreſiſtible Arguments of their folly. Yet 'tis ſtrange that every Houſe ſhould be built by ſome man, and he that built all things ſhould not be God. 'Tis ſtrange that the God of this world hath ſo far blinded their eyes, that in ſeeing they ſhould ſee, and not perceive the inviſible things of God; *viz.* his eternal power and Godhead, which the things that are ſeen have made ſo legible, and wrote in thoſe obvious Characters, which he that runs may read. But theſe are they of whom the Scripture is fulfilled, *In ſeeing they*

do

do ſee, but not perceive; in hearing they do hear, but underſtand not, leſt they ſhould be converted, and eternally ſaved. When they ſhall ſleep in the duſt, they will find that their damnation ſlumbers not, whatever they may now dream of. If the Scriptures be true, there can be no folly and madneſs comparable to the contempt either of the Means, or Author of Eternal Salvation. If they be falſe and forged (as men of this Leven muſt conclude before they can become ſuch abſolute and devoted Vaſſals to their luſts) I know not how we can give credit to any civil Hiſtory or Chronicle, or extend our Faith beyond what our eyes behold: No humane Records having had more general and uncontrouled Tradition to recommend them to the belief and credit of paſt Ages than this which is given by divine Inſpiration. Now 'twere very irrational to caſt off and diſown thoſe civil and prophane Hiſtories which all Nations, Kindred and Tongues have received and believed. Upon which advantages none ever have had higher recommends than the ſacred Record of Scripture. As, 1. From the reception of it in the world. 2. From the concurrent Teſtimony of ſtrangers. 3. From the conceſſions of the very Adverſaries of the Truth. 4. From the Relaters or Pen-men of this

this holy Book, we have no ſmall Arguments to believe them; and conſequently the way of Salvation preſcribed by them. For they tell us, that that which they had heard, which they had ſeen with their eyes, which they had lookt upon, which their hands had handled of the word of life, that they delivered in writing. In which by their ſeveral appeals to, and quotations out of the Old Teſtament, they have juſtified the credit and authority of it in the New; who by their diſtinct relation, and impartial account of matters of fact, even where their own Infirmities might have tempted them to a concealment; yet there they have not held their peace, where the Spirit by which they were acted inſpired them in the relation.

Obj. *But they were bad men, and had a deſign to impoſe upon the world.*

R. If the vindicating the honour and authority of the Scriptures might be accounted no digreſſion, whilſt it proves how unreaſonable the contempt is which theſe men pour out upon them, and their own everlaſting Intereſts, I would reply, 1. That the exemplary and holy lives of thoſe they traduce, are ſufficient Reaſons to deny the charge. 2. Admitting they were bad, yet

they were men still, and so rational, as not to pass through many cruel mockings, scourgings, nay cruel deaths upon no account or advantage which they could propound to themselves that could possibly refund, or recompence them for those despiteful usages they met with upon that score. Which things sure can carry no great endearments along with them, by which they could be recommended to their choice. Had there been any outward profit or preferments as appendant to their Imposture, they might have been Arguments to bad men to have ventured upon the cheat: But sure there could be no pleasure in torment, nor any great profit in parting with all which they possessed, in discharging the trust they pretended was laid upon them; and in a zealous asserting, that what they related was truth, especially, if they were conscious, that it was at best a delusion. If the Miracles which Christ wrought were true, certainly the Religion and Scriptures which deliver us the account of them can't be false; which, as to matter of fact, the most profest and implacable Enemies could not deny. All the despite they could in kindness to themselves do, was to baffle themselves in the opinion of the principle by which he acted. *Thou castest out Devils by* Belzebub

Belzebub. But how can that be credible, when the things which were wrought were above and beyond the power of natural cauſes to produce? So that though Satan be the Prince of the Power of the Air, yet he was too weak to do thoſe mighty works, to which none could pretend, but he that is mighty to ſave. Beſides, if Satan could have wrought Miracles, certainly he was ſo wiſe and politick, as not to do them in deſign to deſtroy and ſubvert his own Kingdom, or to confirm and ratifie that Doctrine, whoſe whole ſcope and purport was to propagate the intereſt of that holy and undefiled Religion, which was no way conſonant to, or conſiſtent with the purpoſes and intendments of him, who goes up and down doing evil. And if the Reſurrection of our Saviour be true, as to matter of fact, we can be no longer left in doubt, or have the leaſt avenue left for unbelief to creep in it, or room to ſet the ſole of its foot upon: And that it can be falſe is hard to conceive, when perſons who were eye-witneſſes of it, have declared it, and that under no temptation of profit, or ſecular advantage; nay, it coſt them dear to vouch this Truth, which

Per naturæ vim non fieri poteſt ut ſolâ voce aut contactu, morbi graves ſubito tollantur; and the Devil hath no power above it. *Grot. de ver. Relig. p.* 45.

some of them bought with no less price than their blood; and sure none would pay so dear for a lye, or make so unreasonable a purchase of a thing that's worth, nay worse than nothing. Besides, had the thing been false,it would have been vouched with fewer Witnesses. The Apostles were a Jury not to be excepted against, but as if this had been too slender an evidence, he was seen of no less than five hundred at once, too many to conspire together in imposing a falshood upon the world, and the generations which were to come: An Engine of fewer Wheels being fitter for such a design, when a jar in one of them defeats the motion, and disappoints the project of the whole. In short, circumstances of less remark, and more difficulty to be refuted, must, in common policy, have been chosen to have supported a falshood. But we believe and are sure, that it is a great truth, upon which both the Law and the Prophets, the Gospel and whole Mass of Christianity hangs and depends: But the allwise God hath settled the Pillar of our Faith upon a basis and foundation which is elect and precious, laid in *Sion*, against which the strongest Efforts and most malicious Essays of evil men shall ne'r prevail. The word thus planted, watered by such Miracles, rooted

and

and ratified by ſuch undeniable proofs, grew mightily and prevailed, even at that very time when every one, in moſt places, endeavoured its extirpation, παντάχοῦ ἀντιλέγεται. *Late diffuſa per vicos*, ſaith *Pliny* to *Trajan*.

And ſhall it wither among us, whilſt 'tis under the heat and influence of the ſecular powers? *Pudet hæc opprobria nobis, &c.* Is it not a ſhame that there ſhould be in us an evil heart of unbelief in departing from the living God, doubting, nay, denying the Lord that bought us, turning his very Oracles into ſport and ridicule?

Obj. *Theſe things perhaps may be allowed us as truths, but not ſo pertinent to the ſubject in hand.*

R. That a beaten path may lead a man too far out of the way is not to be denied; but if what hath been ſaid may tend to juſtifie the Scriptures to be of divine Authority, and undoubted Rule to live by; we need no other Glaſs to ſhew us the uglineſs of impenitency, and extream folly, which is bound up in the Hearts of thoſe Fools which neglect or deſpiſe the methods of Salvation, which *Job* here uſed; by entreating for, and ſeeking after pardoning grace, than which there can be no other way nor means under Heaven, by which we can be ſaved. For till the Rule

it ſelf be queſtioned, the way to Life which it chalks out cannot be lightly ſpoken evil of or deſpiſed, and therefore this ſmall digreſſion in its behalf will not be a total aberration I ſuppoſe from the mark we aim at.

4. Is it our concern and intereſt with earneſtneſs to ſeek after pardon and forgiveneſs of ſin, eſpecially when we are to ſleep in the duſt? [then from hence we learn, that there will be another day of account, and ſtate of retribution, wherein we ſhall receive according to what we have done in the fleſh.] *Job* knew that there would be a general day of Harveſt, when he muſt return and bring his Sheaves with him, (wherewith the Lord complained he had been preſt;) and therefore he now begs that he would pleaſe to put in his Sickle, and cut up thoſe Tares, which elſe would become as Goads in his Sides, and Thorns in his Eyes for ever.

Had death paſſed the final Sentence, and the Grave been the extream and ultimate Puniſhment of his Sin, he needed not have been ſo inquiſitive after his *quietus eſt*, and ſo paſſionately deſirous to have his pardon ſealed. All his cares and concerns for that might have periſht, and ſlept in the duſt; for Sin, that Root of bitterneſs, would have been turned into rottenneſs, and the Bloſſom

of

of it into duſt, but his earneſtneſs at this time declared his expectation of a future audit, and day of account. He knew what the Wiſe Man ſaid was an irrefragable truth; *That for all theſe things God will bring thee to Judgment.* He ſaw not only the pale Horſe, but a worſe thing lacquying after it; *viz.* Hell and Judgment cauſing an everlaſting ſeparation from the preſence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power; ſo that we ſee from whence the Fire that burnt within him was kindled, and by what Engine his Spiritual deſires were ſcrued up to that height. He knew that it was appointed for him once to dye, and after that the Judgment; now God was taking his Fan into his hand, (as he apprehended) to winnow and try every action which had paſſed him, to ſift and examine every paſſage of his Life, and to paſs a final verdict, and concluſive ſentence upon him. He that was not ſo quick-ſighted as *Job*, by the Light of Nature, the Candle of the Lord, ſaw this. I mean *Cicero*, *Qualiſquiſque ſit, quid agat, quid in ſe admittat, quâ mente quâ pietate colat, religionem intueri piorumque & impiorum habere rationem, lib. 2. de legib.* *Ovid* obſerved that death could only kill the Body, he had a better part, which was to ſurvive and out-live the

date of his natural Life, which was to ascend into another place than what the Body was to sleep in.

Cum volet illa dies quæ tantum corporis hujus
Jus habet, incerti & spatium mihi finiet ævi.
Parte tamen meliore mei super alta perennis
Astra ferar.

Had not this been *Job*'s case, he needed not have begged this Oyl of gladness to be poured out upon him, if there had been the same end to Man and Beast, and that as one falls, so the other perisheth, though he might have begged length of days, the death of his Enemies, Riches and Honour on his right hand, Strength and Power to have been before him; yet to have desired Pardon and Forgiveness of Sin, when it had done its worst, and executed whatever it could have inflicted upon him, had been but a nugatory and needless request. What advantage would it have been to *Hezekiah*, to have had it recorded in the Book of the Lords remembrance, how he had walkt before him in truth, and with a perfect and upright Heart; if the Lord had suffered that holy man to have seen everlasting corruption in the Grave, had there been no future recompence of reward

ward to that righteous man? The writing up all the acts of his ſincerity in the duſt, in which he was now ſummoned to lay down his head, [*thou ſhalt dye and not live*;] or engraving them upon Pillars of Braſs, had been of an equal choice. If the Sun ſets everlaſtingly upon the good and bad, the juſt and unjuſt. If Heaven be but a religious Romance, and Hell a Fable and deſigned cheat, to keep the World in awe, it might be as rationally ſaid, Let us eat and drink for to morrow we muſt dye, as to be ſo highly ſollicitous to have our iniquities pardoned, and our tranſgreſſions taken away, when we ſhall ſleep in the duſt. No, *Job* knew that there remained a reſt for the people of God. He knew there were Rivers of pleaſure at the Lords right hand, for the righteous; That in the midſt of that Paradice there was a Tree of Life, if he could once enter in, he might ſit under its ſhadow; and the fruit of it would be very pleaſant to his taſte, for he might eat thereof and live for ever. He knew there was an everlaſting inheritance for the Saints in light, which he deſired to be aſſured of before he entred into the Land of darkneſs; he very well underſtood that there was a place and time of puniſhment approaching. That *Tophet* was ordained of old;

yea,

yea, for the King it is prepared, and that the Pile thereof is much Wood, he hath made it deep and large, the Breath of the Lord like a Stream of Brimſtone doth kindle it, which needs no more evidence to prove than the nature of his Prayer, and the time of his Supplication, which he directs to the Almighty.

How happy were it if we would take a proſpect beyond the Grave, conſidering, that on the other ſide of that Land of forgetfulneſs, there is a place where every thing ſhall be brought to remembrance. 'Tis ſaid of the *Chineſes*, they are ſo wiſe that they ſee with both Eyes: *Job* was that wiſe man, who whilſt he is viewing with one Eye his Grave, the Bed in which he was ere long to ſleep, with the other he looks beyond it, projecting to gain a more laſting Habitation, than any he ever met with in the Land of *Uz*.

5. [A ſerious ſight and proſpect of the Grave, is an effectual inducement to prepare to provide for Eternity.] He that is ſtruck with the ſenſe of his latter end, will be wiſe to Salvation. When *Mary* was gone out from the Company, they judged that ſhe was gone to her Brothers Grave to weep there, ſuppoſing that the very ſight and conſideration

tion of the place, would awaken her to a juſt reſentment of the loſs of ſo dear a Friend. *Solomon* thought the Ant an excellent School-Maſter to teach the Sluggard diligence. The Grave is as good a Tutor to any man that will attend to its Lectures. A deaths Head ſpeaks louder, and is oftentimes better heard than that which hath a Tongue in it. The Miniſters of the Goſpel may lift up their voices like a Trumpet, whilſt the people are like deaf Adders. God ſpeaks by this Mouth to them, he cries at the Gates, and at the coming in of the Doors, ſaying, *O ye ſimple ones underſtand wiſdom, and ye Fools be of an underſtanding heart*; he ſaith, *Hear, for I will ſpeak of excellent things*, &c. *For my mouth ſhall ſpeak truth, and wickedneſs is an abomination to my lips*, &c. *Receive my inſtruction and not Silver, and knowledge rather than choice Gold.* But alas, how few turn at his reproof, how many ſet at nought all his Counſel? But when the Lord ſends a Meſſage to them as he did to *Hezekiah*, to ſet their Houſes in order, for they ſhall dye and not live, they turn their Faces to the Wall and weep, then they will caſt a mournful Eye upon their ſins.

Prov. 8. 5, 6.

Verſe 10.

Prov. 1. 25.

Abſolom

Abſalom ſent to *Joab*, but no meſſage would bring him, till he ſaw his Field on Fire, and then he ariſes and ſpeeds to him: God directs many meſſages to us his Miniſters, riſing early and ſending them, but they are ready to ſay, pray excuſe me, I cannot come; but when their Corn Fields are on Fire, when death is kindling that flame that never will go out, when his Pale horſe begins to daſh, and they apprehend they are ready to give up the Ghoſt, then they cry out with a loud voice, What muſt we do that we may be ſaved? Now call for the Elders, the Miniſters of the Church, that they may pray over us and to the Lord for us, if poſſibly there may be hope, if peradventure the Lord will give us repentance that we may be ſaved. Now they cry with *Balaam*, oh that I might dye the death of the righteous, and that my latter end might be like his! Oh that he would awake to the pardoning of my ſin, and to the taking away of my tranſgreſſion, before I ſleep in the duſt! If any thing will rouze the ſinner to call upon his God, it will be this Storm, when the Sea runs high and the poor crazy Veſſel is ready to be daſht againſt the Rock of Ages, the ſinner will then if ever ariſe and call upon his God, unleſs he cares not that he periſheth everlaſtingly. This puts an

Edge

Edge upon the appetite, and renders the deſires keen, and unſatiable like the Hart, it pants after God when it comes in ſight of the Grave, the Land where no water is, a dry and thirſty Land where there's nothing but duſt to lick, and ſleep in. It was not for nothing that *Joſeph* of *Arimathea* built his Tomb in his Garden. Nor was a death's head ſerved up at the greateſt Feſtivals an unwholſom diſh. The nouriſhment or conſiderations they afford, ſerving to cramp the Vanity, and put a reſtraint upon that Riot and Luxury, to which the prevalency of Temptations was apt to expoſe them. Thoſe who run with the greateſt violence in the broad ways, uſually make a ſtand when they come upon the brink. This precipice, if a man be not judicially hardned, muſt melt, muſt amaze him. If he be not paſt feeling, the Sting of Death will wound him to that degree, that he muſt complain of its preſent miſery, and endeavour to the utmoſt, to obviate thoſe everlaſting torments which are in ſo cloſe a reverſion. The dawning of this day, if they be not in a dead ſleep, muſt awaken them to a diligent ſearch and inquiry after that Pearl of great price we meet with in the Text, *viz.* Pardon of ſin. He muſt be deaf indeed that can ſtop his ears, that will not hear this charmer, which

which tells him, that if now his iniquity be not taken away, it will ſtand upon his ſcore for ever. If he be not now reinſtated and reconciled to the favour of God, he will be caſt off for ever. The Lord will ſhut up in anger his tender mercy, he will forget to be gracious to him, and will be favourable no more. If this do not hold thine eyes waking, nothing can; if this will not make thee to conſider to remember the Lord whom thou haſt offended, to be troubled, and cauſe thy Spirit to be even overwhelmed within thee, nothing will move thee; neither doſt thou account thy everlaſting life, thy Soul, dear to thee; thou art willing to be bound in Chains of darkneſs for ever, to dye miſerably, to dye eternally. This bitter Pill hath wrought kindly and effectually upon others; but ſo tough and obſtinate are ſome mens humours, that it will not move them. By this is the iniquity of *Jacob* purged, and it hath been the fruit of this conſideration, to take away their ſin. But when the Lord would purge men by this Phyſick, and they would not be purged, they ſhall never be purged till he cauſeth his fury to reſt upon them; he hath ſpoken, he will do it, he will not go back, neither will he repent, *Ezek.* 24. 13, 14.

6. [Thus

6. [This vindicates the zeal, and juſtifies the prudence and wiſdom of the juſt in their diligent and earneſt ſearch after favour, and reconciliation with God.] You now ſee to what purpoſe the expences (the waſt, as the world calls it) of all their prayers and tears; you ſee the reaſon why the Spouſe puts on her veil, walks about the City, and makes diligent ſearch; 'tis for her Beloved, ſhe is ſeeking after him whom her Soul loved. Hath ſhe her ſtaff in her hand, her bones girt? can't ſhe be ſatisfied, till ſhe hath found what ſhe enquires after? no wonder; She is labouring for life, nay for the favour, the loving kindneſs of God, which is better than life. I know well the men of the world ſay, this zeal is but madneſs, and this Spiritual grief what doth it, but teaſe and torment us before our time? 'Tis a temper that never propheſieth well concerning us, and therefore they account all men who are bond tenants to this houſe of mourning, no better than the man in the commody, ſelf tormentors. *An cuiquam homini viſum eſt ſe ut cruciet, depone hos raſtros*, &c. But wiſdom is juſtified of her Children, and 'tis prudence to celebrate the paſſover, though it be eaten with four herbs. Will the Soul be too dear a purchaſe to part with the world for it? Will the exchange run too high

high to commute our preſent vanities (which are but as the drop in the bucket,) for thoſe Rivers of pleaſure which are at Gods right hand for ever? This I know is the ſenſe or nonſence rather of carnal and worldly men, who glory in their ſhame, whoſe God is their bellies, whoſe end will be deſtruction. Theſe account the ſmile of a great perſon, above the favour of the Almighty, or the light of his countenance. If he may take his ſwing and be indulged in his foul and fulſom complacencies, he never troubles his head, much leſs his heart, with *Job*'s queſtion. Why doeſt thou not pardon my trangreſſion, *&c*?

If the South-wind awake and blow upon his Garden of pleaſures, that thoſe Spices may flow forth; 'tis as the breath of his noſtrils; the only Savour he delights in. The Chriſtian whoſe Kingdom is not of this world, is in queſt of a better paradice; And *Eden* where the tree of life is planted, where the true Vine the Lord Jeſus Chriſt grows and flouriſhes for ever, that he may feed of thoſe luſcious and tender Grapes, that he may drink of that new Wine, which is preſt from thoſe Cluſters of *Canaan*, which will cheer the heart, rejoyce and refreſh the Soul to eternity. Now if this be folly, we have reaſon

to

to be more fooliſh, for the fooliſhneſs of God is wiſer than the wiſdom of the World.

1. The wiſdom of ſuch perſons is juſtified,

1. Becauſe they labour for the beſt things. They ſpend their time, their money for that which is bread. The better part, the ſure mercies of *David* are the Merchandiſe they Trade for; common bread will not appeaſe them, it muſt be that which is made of the fineſt of the Wheat, *viz.* The bread which came down from Heaven, the Lord Jeſus. They will not, they cannot be ſatisfied, or value themſelves any thing more than blanks, till the Spirit of God hath ſtampt them with a divine impreſſion, ſealing them up to the day of redemption. Theſe are the wiſe Merchantmen whoſe Bill of lading is not Apes and Peacocks, Riches and Honours, length of days and Proſperity. The Effects of this Merchandiſe are of an higher nature, *viz.* the Pardon of Sin, everlaſting Life, and Inheritance with the Saints in Light. This wiſe and patient man, could ſtand and ſee his Camels and Aſſes, his Sheep and Oxen ſuffer violence and the violent taking them by force, His Children thoſe near relations ſnatcht out of his boſom, and himſelf ſtript of all thoſe injoyments, till he was like to go as naked out of the World as he came in. Yet all this while

he opened not his mouth. He could part with his Estate, his Friends, his Life. But not with his God. Now he lifts up his voice like a Trumpet, and calls mightily; methinks I hear him saying, *My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?* Lord wilt thou not pardon my sin, and take away mine iniquity before I sleep in the dust? I can be content to have my sun set in a Cloud, but Lord do not thou hide thy face, and Eclipse the Light of thy Countenance. 'Tis hard to sit by mine own Cistern if it be broken and dry, and have no water; But if it be so, I know how to want, as well as to abound; But Lord, let not the well spring of life be sealed. I will be contented to be denied the fruit of every tree which is in the garden, nay to be expelled my earthly paradise, but Lord set not a *Cherubim* with a flaming Sword over the tree of life. If he shall please to lay mine honour in the dust I can be abased, as well as exalted. But oh, Lord, whatever becomes of my Body, let my Soul be safe, to which end be pleased to pardon my transgression and take away mine iniquity. If my name should be now blotted out from amongst men, I can and will submit to thy pleasure; but, Lord, deny me not the white Stone, and the new Name, which is better than those Sons and

Daughters thou haſt taken from me. Satan hath broke in upon me (that wild Boar of the Forreſt.) *He hath laid my Vineyard waſte, and trampled down the Hedge thereof, which defended it on every ſide, and thou heldeſt thy peace.* The *Caldeans* and *Sabeans* thoſe Foxes, have deſpoiled my choiceſt Vines of their Grapes, rifled and ruined me, as to my Temporal concerns, and thou winkedſt at them, but let my Spiritual, my Everlaſting Intereſts be as the Apple of thine Eye.

2. Their Wiſdom appears [in ſeeking mercy at the beſt hand] Why doſt not *thou* pardon my tranſgreſſions, &c? The wiſeſt of Chriſt's Diſciples know well they can no where find eaſe, unleſs they lean in Jeſus breaſt. We may knock at the creature's door, and find no comfort within, they are all dry Breaſts, and empty Veſſels, tunn'd with nothing but wind, and filled with nought but emptineſs. We may turn over every ſtone, but not find pardon, unleſs under the white ſtone cut out of the Mountains, (I mean our Saviour that Rock of the Church) without hands. There is no ſalvation in any other name under Heaven, except the new name, by which alone we can be ſaved. And to this it is that this holy Nation flows. Wicked and ſinful men have Gods many,

and Lords many; their bellies are their Gods, their pleasures, their profits, are their Gods: But the true Christian owns but one God the Father, and the Lord Jesus Christ whom he hath sent. The woman of *Samaria* labouring under her pressing wants of hunger in the time of Famine, came to the King with her Barrel, but he had no Meal either in the Corn-floor, or in the Granary; He gives her a wise answer; *If the Lord doth not help, whence should I?* Had she, with the hungry *Grecian*, gone to Heaven for Bread, she had done wisely; but if those Windows be shut, we may open our mouths wide, elsewhere to little purpose. It stands upon record to a perpetual blemish of *Asa*, that though the disease of his feet was exceeding great, yet he sought not to the Lord, but to the Physicians: As lame as he was, he would halt after them, whom he found Physicians of no value; and though he might dream of ease, yet he found none, for the next account is, that he slept with his Fathers. Had *Saul* been awake, sure he would never have forsaken the lively Oracles of God, to have askt counsel of a Witch, nor have fled from the Temple of the Lord to the Synagogue of Satan,

2 Kings 6. 26. *Help my Lord, Oh King!*

2 Chron. 16. 12.

tan, the Horns of whoſe Altar might puſh him forward, but never redeem or reſcue him from his impending ruine. This hath the Spirit of God ſet as a mark upon his fore-head, not only as the brand of his folly, but as the impulſive cauſe of his ruine, 2 *Chron.* 20. 13. And alſo for asking counſel of one that had a Familiar Spirit, to enquire of it, and enquired not of the Lord, therefore he ſlew him, and turned the Kingdom to *David* the Son of *Jeſſe.*

[That this is the fitteſt place to apply to for relief appears,]

1. Becauſe here we may find it.

2. Here we are welcome to it.

1. Here we may find it; there's Honey in this Rock if we will come to it; there's plenteous redemption, that he may be ſought unto. This Fountain of living waters is not like the Brook *Cherith*, 'tis never dry, the waters of it fail not, and the Bread of Life is always ſure. It was wiſdom in *Jacob* to ſend his Sons to *Egypt*, becauſe there was Corn there, which might feed himſelf and Family, that they might not periſh with hunger. Here's Food that will ſatisfie the hungry Soul, that flows plenteouſly out of this Rock. The Lord Jeſus

Fontes lymphis obſtrepunt manantibus.

Christ is that Olive, whose labour never fails, but will yield that Oyl, which makes the Face shine, a Vine that ever sends forth his luscious and tender Grapes; a Pomegranate that always flourishes; this Rod and Stem of *Jesse* doth ever Bud and Blossom, and bring forth Almonds. 'Tis a Tree planted by the Rivers of waters, the Leaf fades not, the Fruit never fails, 'tis wisdom then to sit under the shadow of such a Tree.

2. Here we are welcome to it, this Fountain is never sealed, 'tis as free as 'tis full. *Eat, O Friends, yea, drink abundantly, O Beloved*; This is the Treatment they meet with. There will be a Jubile, a joy in Heaven for a returning Prodigal. He will put the Ring, and best Robe of Immortality and Glory upon thee, because thou wert dead and art alive again, thou wert lost and art found. He hath been free in his invite, he'll be as kind in his treat; he that stretcheth his Arms wide to receive thee, will shut them as close to embrace thee; he that calls thee to him, will draw thee after him. Watchman, what of the night? return, come, *enter into the joy of thy Lord.* 'Tis a joy to our Heavenly Father to see a stray Sheep returning to the fold. *The Spirit and the Bride say, Come, and let him that heareth say, Come, and whosoever will let him come,*

come, and welcome; *for he hath blotted out as a thick Cloud thy tranſgreſſions, and as a Cloud thy ſins. Return unto me, for I have redeemed thee, yea, and will with joy and triumph receive thee. Heus tu peccator, bono animo ſis, vides ubi de tuo redita gaudeatur. Tertul. de pœnit. Pœnitentium lachrymæ ſunt vinum Angelorum.* The Tears of Penitents is a Wine that makes glad the Hearts of Angels. *With gladneſs and rejoicing they ſhall be brought, they ſhall enter into the Kings Palace.* Now tell me, Is it wiſdom to ſit ſtill, or to ariſe and go into the Kings Palace, the Tents of the Lord of Hoſts, who will be a Sun and a Shield to thee, thy guide and thy guard, thy direction and thy defence, thy recompence, thy exceeding great reward. He, even he it is that hears thy Prayers, that accepts thy burnt Offerings, that blots out thy iniquity, tranſgreſſion and ſin for his name ſake.

Iſa. 44. 22.

Pſal. 45. 15.

3. The prudence of theſe perſons does appear in ſeeking Gods favour as a remedy againſt this evil. [Becauſe thereby they provide againſt that miſchief which as to the nature of it, is inſufferable.] Sin is exceeding ſinful, a burthen that will ſink them into the Abyſs, the bottomleſs pit of miſery. If then the Cup be ſo bitter that they cannot drink

it, 'tis wisdom to pray, and that earnestly, that it may pass from them. Bitter things are written of it in the Book of God, the Psalmist tells us that there is a Cup in the hand of the Lord, and that the Wine of it is Red, it is full of mixture and that he poureth out of the same, but the dregs thereof all the wicked of the Earth shall wring them out, and drink them. This is a thing to be dreaded both as to it self and followers. The whole body of sin is venomous, but the Sting is in the Tail of it, which as the Dragon, that drew the Stars of heaven after it, so doth this draw a very long Train and unhappy retinue of miseries and mischiefs with it. 'Twould require a long roul to audit all the evils, to tell the Towers of this strong hold of *Satan*, the many links of this Chain of Darkness, the several Joints and Sinews, Parts and Members of this body of death. From which, Skin for Skin and all that he had, would the Apostle have given to be delivered, to escape the Circle, to get out of the Ken and Compass of its sorceries, which hath bewitched and ruined, so many with its incantations. How passionately did *Job* pray that this spiritual *Babylon* might be razed, the City, which (he thought) had foundations laid too deep in his own heart, whose builder and maker was

Satan,

Satan. This was that myſtical *Sodom* which was no better than a Lake of Fire, partly within him, which made theſe words burſt out, Oh take away mine iniquity, *&c.* Partly without him, in that place where the worm dies not, and the fire never goes out. This is that dagger which wounds the Conſcience to the quick; This is that fiſt of wickedneſs which ſo often, and ſo ſeverely buffets us. Wherefore 'tis the higheſt prudence, to beſeech the Lord thrice, yea to give him no reſt, till he hath tranſlated us from the gall of bitterneſs, breaking the bonds of iniquity in ſunder, and caſting thoſe Cords from us. I might here enter upon the conſideration and diſcourſe of ſin as to that contagion and guilt, which are connate with it, and involved in the nature and being of it, as alſo of the evil of puniſhment, which is the appendix of it and conſequential to it. It would make any man fall down and tremble, (as the woman in the Goſpel) that toucheth the hem of its garment. 'Tis a bitter Pill, made of the very poyſon of aſpes, Vinegar and Gall are under its lips, who ever taſts it will find it a Cup of abominations. Nor are the Effects any thing better, as thoſe who drink of the Wine of her fornications will experiment when the intoxication of it ſhall make them ſtumble and

fall

fall into perdition. This is the Star which is called wormwood, which hath so bitter and malevolent an aspect and influence, as is not only the presage, but cause of ruin. It burns like a Lamp, enkindling the Fire that can never be extinguished. We may stile it ὑπερβάλλον βάρος, 'tis so hard a saying, so massy a burthen that none can bear it. Is not he a wise man then, who sits down and considers what Levies sin will cost him. And that upon consideration, that it is an enemy which he cannot overcome; When he finds that the Prince of the power of the air is too mighty for him; That the old Serpent the Devil is too subtil to engage with. That iniquity hath a Sting which wounds beyond the patience of any to endure; He flees to the good *Samaritan* who hath Oyl to cure his wounds, and to heal the hurt of the daughter of his people effectually. We may conclude then that to fear the Lord that's wisdom, and to depart from evil by fleeing to him for the pardon of sin that's understanding.

7. If pardon be more eminently desirable when we have a Prospect of the grave: [Then we may infer that sin is of a most afflicting consideration, especially in our latter end.] It makes our bed in our sickness, our death bed very hard and uneasy. It appears with large dimensions

dimenſions at all times, but when the Sun is ſetting then are the Shadows of it longeſt; now 'tis offered to the taſt as it is in it ſelf, and ſetled upon its own lees. This bitter Pill is not wrapt up in thoſe pleaſant Vehicles of Vanity and Pleaſure. When we are ready to lye down in the bed of the grave, ſin is ſtript of all its attire, all the defects and *impars* of this monſter are expoſed to view, which in time of health are often palliated and hid by ſome preſent and ſeeming advantages. Now the whore perfumes the bed of her fornications with Spices; ſhe tells the young man (who goeth as an Ox to the Slaughter) that her Husband is gone from home, and that he is in a far Country. But now that death is at hand, he is come home to the ſinner, ſtanding with that Wolf at the door, which is ready to tear him in pieces, and there is none to deliver him out of his hand. The Book of the Law which hitherto the ſinner hath claſpt up, and laid uſeleſs by him is now laid open before him, the Seals of which, death is found worthy to unlooſe, ſpreading the Text and diſplaying all the terrours of it before him. Whilſt he ſtands upon the mount of the Grave, he takes a full Landskip of the Land of Darkneſs, as being upon the very brink and border of it. When the ſinners time of

Youth

Youth and health lasts, all is spring with him, his flatteries and self deceits are Green and flourishing. But now he sees the top of his *Carmel* is withered; the Lock of his days and age is spun up, and time is like to be no more. And if he hath no further space of repentance or opportunities to retrieve and redeem what he hath lost, he is sensible that he can no way discharge or satisfy his debentures, he is bankrupt and reprobate concerning the faith, so that without any bail he must be committed to the Prison of Hell, where he must abide till he pay the uttermost farthing, and then it will be hard to say when he'll meet with a Jail delivery. To have the Sun, Moon and Stars wrapt up in darkness is never joyous. But when St. *Paul* was labouring for life, when he was afflicted and tossed with tempest, then to have those glorious Luminaries Eclipsed and wrapt up in Clouds, all hopes of being saved were taken away. The memory of sin and guilt is sad at any time. But to have the Items of it brought in when we are about to pay our last, and great debt to nature, will inflame both our expence and misery. It being hard to satisfy two such great Creditours, and make both payments at the same time. When the Soul by reason of its sin is like a troubled

Acts 27. 20.

troubled Sea, foaming and caſting out that mire and dirt, to have ſuch a ſtorm and tempeſt raiſed within its own breaſt, is at all times grievous, not eaſie to ride out, or weather ſo difficult a point. But how much ſadder is it, when our Veſſels are crackt and crazy, ready to ſink and to be ſwallowed up by death, which gapes wide upon us? To have this no ſmall tempeſt lye upon us, ſeems to reduce us to St. *Paul*'s circumſtances, though of an higher nature, our hopes of Salvation are well-nigh taken away. Sin in an abſtracted ſenſe is but lean and ill-favoured to behold, but when it brings a deaths head with it, and arrays it ſelf in grave-cloths, there's nothing ſo amazing and terrible, driving the offender often into diſtreſs, ſometimes deſpair.

8. If the pardon of ſin be ſo deſirable, eſpecially at this time [Then in how happy a condition and ſtate are they, who can have acceſs with boldneſs to the Throne of Grace] They bring their Petitions thither with great aſſurance they ſhall not go away with a denial of their requeſts; the Lord hath ſaid, Ask of me, though it be to the whole of the Kingdom of Heaven, and it ſhall be granted you; knock, and the door of mercy, that everlaſting gate, ſhall be opened to you, that

ye

ye may enter in. *David* may beg bread of *Nabal*, and yet go empty away: But our heavenly Father satisfies the hungry with good things; you find them in the words; *viz.* pardon and forgiveness. I may apply what St. *John* speaks of in another sense; 'tis that bread of life which comes down from Heaven: Not like that our Fathers ate in the Wilderness, and are dead, but 'tis that bread, of which whoever eateth, he shall live for ever. No wonder *Job* had so good an appetite to it, and desire of it: He earnestly pleads, and passionately begs for it; Oh why dost thou not give me this bread! Oh why dost thou not fill my bucket with this water of life, that I may never hunger, that I may never thirst more! Or what's all one in effect, *Why dost thou not pardon mine iniquity, and take away my transgression?* A liberty of access to this fountain of living water, was as the dew of Heaven upon the tender herbs. It kept the patience and faith of this Saint green and flourishing. The reason of that reproof which *Moses* fell under was as evident, as his distrust and diffidence were unaccountable. What though he was slow of speech, and had a stammering tongue, was he not under the care and conduct of him that made his mouth, and had given him liberty

berty to open it freely to him? When *David* could by faith and prayer apply himſelf, and flee to the Name of the Lord (that ſtrong Tower) ſuch was his happineſs, ſuch was his ſafety, that he durſt venture upon *Goliath*; for he had acceſs to him who gave victory in the day of battel: He valued not his Helmet of Braſs upon his head, his Coat of Male, his Greaves of Braſs upon his legs, his Target upon his ſhoulder; He knew he could be ſupplied with far better accoutrements, than any he was equipt with, or *Saul*'s Armoury afforded: He valued not his Spear, though it was as big as a Weavers Beam, whilſt he knew (he fighting the Lord's Battel) ſhould not be denied the ſafeguard of a more divine Panoply. What ſecurity muſt he be under, who for the asking for, might obtain that Helmet of Salvation which was ſubject to no battery, nor that could be pierced thorow with any Arrow the uncircumciſed could ſhoot at him? Satan was this *Goliath*, armed with the terrours of death, with Arrows dipt in the venom of Sin, that poiſon of Aſps, which fiery Darts he had ſhot at this patient man, which made him cry out, and ſure with the greater earneſtneſs, whilſt the ſparks of his own guilt might be acceſſory to their enkindling. But with this ſacrifice of

prayer

prayer was the Lord so well pleased, that when the gales of his panting Soul blew upon the Garden of the Lord, how did the Spices thereof flow forth! Nor is this *Job*'s case only, but of every Soul that is sick of sin, and that labours under the distemper of it; but if his prayer, that South-wind awake, he will not suffer it to sleep in the dust, till he hath bid it a good night, and secured its everlasting rest. This is thy Beloved, this is thy Spouse, Oh Daughter of *Sion*, who, as he is the fairest, so he is the kindest of ten thousands. And though he will divorce those that go an whoring after their own lusts, they shall neither be fed at his Table, nor sleep in his Bosom; they are separated *à mensa & toro*: Yet if the sinner remembers from whence he is fallen, and return, the Lord will remember the love of his first Espousals, reinstate him in his favour, and receive him with fresh embraces. This was *Job*'s faith, or else I may say of his application to the Lord for pardon, it was no better than madness, and of prayer, what doth it? But as he believed, so he spake, and so he found it experimentally.

Appli-

Application.

Let me then end this with advice to a ſinner. [Repent, return, as thou expecteſt pardon, *&c.*] Let me ſpeak to thee in the words of the Prophet, *Watchman, what of the night? if you will inquire, inquire, return, come, the morning comes, and alſo the night*; the morning when the Lord will awake to Judgment; the night when we ſhall lye down in the Bed of the Grave. Now therefore eſpecially, ſeeing it is thy laſt Eſſay for Heaven, thy final Effort and Attempt for Salvation, therefore now eſpecially ſeek whilſt he may be found, call upon him whilſt he is near, or the Gulph may become ſo wide betwixt you and him that heareth Prayers, that thou maiſt call, but he cannot, he will not hear; tell him that ſin was ever bitter to thy taſte, but now 'tis Wormwood and Gall to thee; tell him (as one elegantly and piouſly ſpeaks to our purpoſe) that thou wilt prize his love more than ever thou didſt or could do before, give him no reſt till he give thy Soul reſt, and fill it with himſelf; ſurely thou wouldſt not willingly go out of this World, with thy Evidences blotted and blurred;

1 Exhort.

Iſa. 21. 11, 12.

red; be toſt and daſht with waves in ſight of the Haven; hadſt thou not rather go to thy Grave in peace? Deſire him to ſhine out upon thee a little before thou goeſt away hence, and be no more ſeen. Let not then thy weak hands, thy feeble knees, thy drooping head fail and fall down when God is the lifter of them up; with *Rachel* refuſe to be comforted till thy ſins be not, and thy tranſgreſſions be taken away. The aſſurances which God hath given to a repenting ſinner is no ſmall encouragement to his duty, and render all his *why's* very pertinent to his diſconſolate Eſtate; *Why art thou caſt down, O my Soul? and why art thou diſquieted within me? truſt in God, I ſhall yet praiſe him, who is the health of my Countenance, and my God.*

Perhaps you will ſay, Thou art ſick of ſin, which hath occaſioned an high ferment in thy mind, great anguiſh and agony in thy Soul, but *is there no Balm in* Gilead? *is there no Phyſician there?* Satan, 'tis true, is that Prince of the power of the Air, who often raiſeth thoſe Clouds which Eclipſe the light of God's countenance, and damps the Chriſtian's joy. He ſees it to be a fit ſeaſon to ſtrike when he is hot with the conſideration and ſenſe of ſin, when thou art a Reed bruiſed with thy tranſgreſſion, he'll then endeavour

to

to break thee in pieces, and when thy Flax is ſmoking, then will this Dragon pour out waters, if it be poſſible to quench it; but thy condition is happy in this; thou haſt a God hearing prayer, pardoning iniquity, tranſgreſſion and ſin, for his name ſake, unto whom thou maiſt have acceſs with boldneſs. Here are iniquities and tranſgreſſions in the Text, but there's one alſo there that pardons them, that takes them away; and if we repent, he will repent him of the evil, he will return and leave a bleſſing behind him. Let us not therefore gratifie this grand Enemy, and by an evil heart of unbelief depart from, diſoblige or grieve our beſt Friend, who hath promiſed to ſeal us up to the day of redemption, and if we put our truſt in him, we ſhall never be confounded, but one day ſet to our Seal that he is true. Let us not then add to our torment, nor heap Coals of Fire upon our own Heads, ſin will make our Pills bitter enough, though we do not add this ingredient of deſpondency, the portion of that Cup will be ſharp enough, though we put not in this Vinegar and Gall. And ſin will look big enough upon us, though we do not make it greater than can be forgiven. The Cords of iniquity will prove a whip ſevere enough, though this Wire be not put into

the lash of it. Sufficient for our patience will be the simple evil thereof. This was that Staff of Bands which brake *David*'s Bones, and caused him to roar by reason of the disquietness of his Soul, *Psal.* 51. 8. This is that which breaks the sinner in sunder, that takes him up by the Neck, dashes him to pieces, and sets him up for a mark, *Job* 16. 12. But let not us bend the Bow against our selves, and pierce our Hearts through with the Arrows of desponding cares: 'Tis true, sin is that rod which dashes us in pieces like a Potters Vessel, but let us not fall upon our selves till we be ground to powder with despair, that Rock of offence. Our conditions by reason of sin are not joyous, but grievous; yet this is our comfort, we have a God to apply to; let him then be our refuge.

Psal. 38. 8. *I am feeble, and sore broken.*

1. Here we ease our weary minds; here we may disburthen our heavy laden Souls. Whilst *David* mused, the fire burnt within, but when his words brake out, his passion vented, his grief asswaged. This is the happiness of an afflicted Soul, that he can come before the Throne of Grace, and there spread its condition

Psal. 39. 3. *I was dumb with silence, I held my peace, even from good words, and my sorrow was stirred, my heart was hot within me; whilst I was musing, the fire burned.*

condition before the Lord; bringing out of his treaſury griefs new and old: This lightens its labouring Veſſel, when it thus caſts this lading over-board; and as St. *Paul* in another caſe ſpeaks, *When they were afflicted and toſſed with no ſmall Tempeſt, they lightned their Ship:* 'Tis no ſmall ſatisfaction to a diſtempered Patient (to him that is ſick of ſin) to remonſtrate his caſe to this Spiritual Phyſician, to tell him where his grief lies, how often it invades him; and to acquaint him with that ſin which ſo eaſily beſets him; to tell him of his weary nights, and how he waters his Couch with his tears; nor are his days any thing better, for when he awakes, his troubles are ever with him; He is ſeldom at quiet, *Satan* is always ſtanding at his right hand, tempting, accuſing, condemning him. This Meſſenger (whoever ſends him) is always buffeting him, he is grievouſly tormented with the Devil, Lord, help him. He ſees 'tis no advantage to hide his ſins that's but to nurſe, and wrap up a viper in his boſom. He opens his heart freely. He does not paint his face, nor dreſs up his condition, but ingenuouſly acknowledges that he hath the Skin of an *Ethiopian*, and ſpots of a Leopard. He diſcovers his Skirts upon his face, and makes his ſhame appear before Jer. 13. 23, 26.

fore the Lord, ſaying, When ſhall I be made clean? oh when ſhall it once be? Sin is of that Flatulent and windy nature, that it puffs the ſinner up like a bladder, his Eyes ſtand out with wickedneſs as well as fatneſs; And therefore Chriſts gives Command, that we ſhould become as little Children, or otherwiſe we cannot enter through the ſtreight Gate into the Kingdom of Heaven. Confeſſion of ſin pricks this bladder, lets out that corruption which is apt to feſter and foul the heart. Whilſt the Soul is under the diſtention and oppreſſion of its ſin, they are no ſmall pangs and pains it endures. But the opening of this Ulcer aſſwages the Torment, abates the Tumour, and puts this Spiritual diſtemper in a way of cure.

2. Let us apply unto the Lord, and make our acceſs to him, becauſe [he hath power and authority to forgive us our ſins, and to reſtore us to that favour which is better than life.] He that can bid the ſick man take up his bed and walk, hath power to take away ſin and forgive iniquity. This is he that invites thee, thou maiſt go to him, ariſe he calleth thee. The reaſoning of the Scribes was in ſome reſpect rational enough. Why doth this man thus ſpeak blaſphemy? who can forgive ſins

Mark 2. 6, 7.

ſave

ſave God only? For he that is not God cannot forgive ſin is a true Propoſition; That's a Jewel only to be found in his Crown, an inſeparable Prerogative, and peculiar Royalty to the King of Heaven; he may uſe his Miniſters as Officers and Heraulds to proclaim it; But 'tis only in his own Office, where this Patent, this Pardon is ſealed, for to him only belong the iſſues from Spiritual, and everlaſting death, ſo that 'tis as well our intereſt as our duty to have a free recourſe to him who hath an abſolute and illimited power, to pardon any offence for his names ſake.

'Tis true a ſinner is a neceſſitous and indigent creature, we may ſay of him as it was of the Earth, before the Spirit of God moved upon it, he is empty and void. But at how full a Breaſt of conſolation does he hang, where if he will ſuck he may be ſatisfied? *Satan* may lay many things to the charge of Gods Elect, conſcience may bring in a long inventory, filled with many guilty Items, and accounts of many and great tranſgreſſions to anſwer for. And ſhall they not then flee to a Crucified Saviour, and take Sanctuary in his wounded ſide, hiding themſelves in the Clifts of that Rock? Sin, it may be, riſes up like a mountain, but he that is mighty to ſave takes

it up as a very little thing, and caſts it into the depths of the Sea, where it ſinks and riſes no more. Are they dejected and laid low? they truſt in one who is the lifter up of their heads; does their ſin like an Hill lift up its head on high? let them apply to him who can take all impediments out of the way, that can cauſe every Valley to be exalted, and every mountain to become a plain, the crooked ſhall be made ſtraight, and the glory of the Lord ſhall be revealed. Is not that Soul in an happy condition that when ſin hath wrapt its face in a mantle, and covered it with Clouds, to have the Sun of righteouſneſs ſcattering thoſe thick miſts of darkneſs, and tranſlating it into the glorious Light of the Sons of God. Say unto the wicked 'tis not ſo with them, their youths ſhall faint and be weary, and the young men ſhall utterly fail, the Ancient of days takes no notice of them, he profeſſes he knows them not, and no wonder, for they are ſtrangers to the life of God, and aliens to the Commonwealth of *Iſrael.* They are diſſipated and ſcattered upon the face of the Earth, and there is none to gather them. They are wounded by the fiery darts of the wicked one, and there's none to bind them up, nor to mollify them with Ointment.

Iſa. 40. 4.

Iſa. 40. 30.

There's

There's Balm in *Gilead*, but none for them; There is Oyl in the horn of Salvation, but the Lord ſaith, *Huic habeo, non tibi.* I have it for the repenting ſinner, not for thee. There is Childrens bread, but 'tis not to be caſt to Dogs. We heard before that *Tophet* is ordained of old, the pile thereof is fire and much Wood, and what will ye ſay if it be already kindled, in the determination and purpoſe of the Lord. Whilſt the impenitent and profane perſon, as *Eſau* (if the tip of a finger dipt in water could allay the inflammation) hath not the leaſt reaſon to hope or expect it. Thus is the ungodly man like the Chaff before the whirlwind, driven from the face of the Earth, he periſheth, and there is none to deliver. He languiſheth, and there is none to ſave him, he fainteth under his Spiritual wickedneſs and diſtempers, and there are no apples to ſtay him, no flagons to comfort him, he is ſick and muſt die for the Love of his ſin. But ſay to the righteous, it is well with him, he is in an happy condition, he hath the God of *Jacob* for his refuge; He hath the Lord for his God to flee to, who hath promiſed that thoſe which wait upon him ſhall renew their ſtrength like an Eagle. He hath ſet a ladder for his *Jacobs* to climb Heaven with.

Iſa. 30. 33.

Iſa. 41. 31.

He

He hath an antidote (which *Job** begs) that will expel the venom of ſin. That Spiritual *Alexipharmac*, which cures the Poiſon of the old Serpent the Devil. This is the encouragement the Soul hath, whiles it labours under the diſtempers of its iniquity and tranſgreſſion. It can go down to *Gilead*, and meet with a Phyſician there, who will heal our backſlidings and love us freely.

* Pardon my tranſgreſſions.

2. Exhort. If the pardon of ſin be ſo deſirable, eſpecially at laſt: [Then let us labour for it in time, before the evil day comes.] A prudent forecaſt upon this account, will be much better than to have our work to do in a day when we ſhall ſay we have no pleaſure in it. Where much is to be forgiven there muſt be much labour. Repentance is no pleaſing work, and therefore let us have as little to do of it, and with it, as we can: Eſpecially then, when we ſhall be leaſt fit for the imployment. 'Tis, to be ſure, a great mercy that God hath inſtituted this holy paſſover, that the deſtroying Angel may not enter our habitations; But we ſhall find it muſt be eaten with four herbs. The tears of repentance, like the waters in the wilderneſs, are very bitter, and 'twill be hard then to Gulp them down. 'Tis a good

good work when 'tis done; but 'tis a difficult operation. Is it not an hard cure to cut off a right hand, to pluck out a right Eye? And this muſt be done (when it offends) unleſs we be judicially blinded, and that will be of very ill conſequence. For we may ſay of ſin, as 'tis ſaid of the Goſpel in another caſe; If ſin be hid, 'tis hid to thoſe that periſh. He that will be a right Chyrurgion in this ſenſe muſt be Eagle Ey'd, to pry into every corner and Angle of the heart. Every room muſt be ſwept. And therefore 'tis no Policy to have this work to do when our Candle is ready to be put out.

Death and ſin are the Lion and the Bear we meet with by the way to Heaven; 'tis too much to have one to take by the beard, and the other by the tooth at the ſame time; 'Twill be too much to have two ſuch Champions to engage at once. *Ne quidem Chriſtianus contra duos.* 'Tis much better, to lye down in peace, to hear the voice of the Lord, and of conſcience ſpeaking kindly to us, and ſaying, Well done, you good and faithful Servants, enter into the joy of the Lord. To have our own hearts tell us, we have fought a good fight, finiſht our courſe, and that now a Crown of Glory is laid up in Heaven for us, which the righteous judge ſhall give us at the laſt day, or night rather, when we are

going

He hath an antidote (which *Job** begs) that will expel the venom of sin. That Spiritual *Alexipharmac*, which cures the Poison of the old Serpent the Devil. This is the encouragement the Soul hath, whiles it labours under the distempers of its iniquity and transgression. It can go down to *Gilead*, and meet with a Physician there, who will heal our backslidings and love us freely.

* Pardon my transgressions.

2. Exhort. If the pardon of sin be so desirable, especially at last: [Then let us labour for it in time, before the evil day comes.] A prudent forecast upon this account, will be much better than to have our work to do in a day when we shall say we have no pleasure in it. Where much is to be forgiven there must be much labour. Repentance is no pleasing work, and therefore let us have as little to do of it, and with it, as we can: Especially then, when we shall be least fit for the imployment. 'Tis, to be sure, a great mercy that God hath instituted this holy passover, that the destroying Angel may not enter our habitations; But we shall find it must be eaten with sour herbs. The tears of repentance, like the waters in the wilderness, are very bitter, and 'twill be hard then to Gulp them down. 'Tis a good

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going to ſleep in the duſt. How would this abate our dying pangs, aſſwage, allay the torments of our diſeaſes, pluck the ſting from death, and make us more than Conquerors over it.

Let it not be deferred, becauſe this will be a very unfit ſeaſon to work in upon ſeveral accounts. [Now the thread of Life is juſt unraveled,] the laſt Sands are dropping; this is no fit time to finiſh repentance, to conciliate the favour of God, and to gain pardon: Thy day is far ſpent, the night is coming on, and if now thou falleſt aſleep before thy work be finiſhed, in the morning thou ſhalt be ſought for, and thou ſhalt not be found, but wilt be loſt and undone for ever. Now put the weight of thy diſtemper (which is very often painful and heavy) into the Scale, and tell me if this be a fit time to work out Salvation. Can the Kingdom of Heaven now ſuffer violence? art thou now able to take it by force, when thy ſtrength is ſpent, thy Spirits waſted? Canſt thou now climb Heaven, or raiſe thy Soul to any pitch when thou art wearied with thy very infirmities? how canſt thou mount up like an Eagle, when thou art ſo full of ſick Feathers, thy Wings flag, and thou in a waſted and drooping ſtate? Sufficient

First.

ent for that day will the evil thereof be, though there be no other ſorrows added to its affliction. The beſt advice then is, to remember our Creator in the days of our health, before that evil day comes in which we ſhall ſay we have no pleaſure, nor power, by reaſon of thoſe great infirmities and diſtractions that will be upon us. *Dum vires anniq; ſinunt tolerate labores*, was good counſel. Now it is that the man is more active and vigorous in all his Atchievements, be they natural or ſpiritual. Now he may with cheerfulneſs run in the ways of Gods commands, and walk to the houſe of God in company, the place where his honour dwells. Now the Intellectuals have ſtrength in their Navel and Marrow in their Bones; the powers and faculties are more ſinewy and ſtrong, better able to take Satan by the Beard, and Sin by the Throat to ſmite and ſlay them. This ſubtle Adverſary is moſt deſirous to engage when we are leaſt able to withſtand; when we are weak, then he is ſtrong to aſſail; then he accounts thy Sling as ſtubble, and will laugh at the ſhaking of the Spear, *Job* 41. 28. A ſick, a death-bed is the Field he deſires to pitch in, (thou canſt not be ignorant of his devices.) He always deſires to winnow us as Wheat; but now eſpecially he'll be ſure

to

to take his Fan into his hand. Let us therefore whilſt ſtrength and health laſt, go out and meet him. Now when thou raiſeſt up thy ſelf, that mighty Enemy is afraid. Thy Sword that layeth at him ſhall hold, and thine Arrows ſhall make him to flee, *Jam.* 4. 7. The Evening of thy day will be a time to receive thy wages, not to earn them. When the Sun ariſes man goes out to labour, not when it's ſetting. In the Evening of our Life, our Eyes will grow heavy with the ſleep of death, and that will be no fit time for labour. Autumn is a ſeaſon to reap thy Harveſt, not to ſow thy Seed, or plant thy Vineyard. St. *Paul* was of this Opinion, who knew how to plant, how to water, and when to receive the increaſe. When his time was ſpent his work was done. He had nothing to do, but recount his labours, receive his wages, and take a proſpect of that inheritance which he was to receive among the Saints in light. I am ready to be offered, and the time of my departure is at hand, and now he had nothing to do but to ſing his *conclamatum eſt*, 'tis finiſhed, I have run my race, I have finiſht my courſe. He had laboured in the Lords Vineyard ſince the hour he came into

Job 41.25,26.

Oculos in morte gravatos.

2 Tim. 4. 6.

into it, he had born the heat and burthen of the day, and now he had nothing to do but to receive his penny. He had furniſhed himſelf with all things for his Voyage, he had made proviſion for Eternity, enſured his lading, and now nothing remained but to hoiſt Sail, looſe Anchor and be gone. Let us imitate St. *Paul*; let us repent whilſt we have a ſpace of repentance. It will ſweeten our paſſage through the Valley of death, it will make our Faces to ſhine, when the very ſhadow of it is drawn over us. *Moſes* ſo lived before God, that when he called him he had nothing to do, but to go up the Mount and die. How happy would it be for us, if when the Lord, when death ſummons us, we may have nothing to do, but to go up into our Beds and die, ſo to run our race, that with good old *Jacob*, when we are weary of this earthly Travel, we may gather up our Feet into the Bed, yield up the Ghoſt, and breathe out our Spirits into the hands of him that gave them?

2. Let us not defer this work till the laſt, [becauſe the longer we neglect to ſeek pardon, the harder it will be to obtain it.] Firſt in reſpect to repentance it ſelf, which muſt be proportioned to the nature and

Firſt, in reſpect of the work of Repentance.

number

number of our iniquities. The greater our debts are, and the longer they run, the harder will our payment be. He that hath much to be forgiven must mourn much. Sin which is now woven is a Spiders Web, which must be all unravelled, before it can be pardoned; and therefore the longer we weave in this Loom, the more work we have to do, or rather undo; for till we take our hands from this Plough, God will not take away our iniquity. We prepare by this but to sow the wind, and that's the way to reap the Whirlwind, but not any crop of pardon or forgiveness. *He that soweth to the Flesh, shall of the Flesh reap corruption*; all which must be purged out, and the Heart cleansed, for God puts not the new Wine in the Text, (I mean pardon) into old Bottles. He never sows this precious Seed in a Field which is not cleared from the Briars and Thorns of sin. God is willing to say to the Soul, Be of good comfort, thy sins be forgiven thee. But these weeds spring up afresh and choak this good Seed, this Soul-saving word of the Lord. Nay the longer sin prevails, we shall find it the more like an old Gout, harder to cure. When a man is but initiated in evil, a young and tender plant of unrighteousness, he is bent with the greater ease,

eaſe, but when he is grown up in wickedneſs, rooted and grounded in the wilderneſs of ſin; it will be hard to tranſplant him into the Paradiſe of God. The Cockatrice is more eaſily cruſht in the Egg, than in the Bird. Sinful motions are like ſome natural, weak and languid in the beginning, but by degrees become irreſiſtible and violent. Our appetites may at firſt be ruled and brought under the power of any, a Child may lead them. When the Soul keeps upon its guard, it makes a Covenant with its Eyes, that they ſhall not behold vanity, a Covenant with its Lips, that they ſhall not ſpeak idly, but ſuch things as may adminiſter grace to the hearers. But if it hath laid the reins upon the Neck of its appetite, ſuffering it to run on, and riot in the ways of wickedneſs, to take a full draught of the waters of iniquity, how inſatiable will the thirſt be? *Quo plus ſunt potæ plus ſitiuntur aquæ.* Like the Horſe-leech it cries Give, give. Yea Luſt grows ſo raving and rampant, that like the great *Leviathan Job* ſpeaks of, it pierceth through ſnares, thou canſt not put an Hook into its Noſe, nor bore his Jaws through with a Thorn. Job 39. Job 41. When a ſinner is come to a cuſtom of ſinning; he is hardened by the deceitfulneſs thereof. Thou maiſt with as much eaſe write upon a

Rock, as make any impreſſion upon that nether Milſtone; and ſhall this be left to be done upon a ſick, a Death-bed? Oh let me tell thee, it will be difficult to break ſo hard a Flint, I mean a ſtony Heart, upon this Pillow; and yet it cannot enter whole into the Kingdom of Heaven. When a long practice of ſin hath made it habitual, and turned it into a cuſtom, 'tis become a Law to the Soul, and carries a commanding power with it; ſo St. *Paul* accounted it, he ſaith he had a Law in his Members, and this led him into captivity to the Law of ſin. The temptations of ſin at the firſt are but ſuggeſtions, they may allure and flatter, the old Serpent may ſhew his ſpeckled Skin, ſollicite and perſuade, but (as they ſay of the Stars, *non cogunt*) they cannot force nor compel. But when Satan hath wormed himſelf into the Heart and Affections of a ſinner, then he graſps and grapples with him, leads him captive at his pleaſure. If he bids him go he muſt go, come, he comes, do this, and he doth it. Will it not be hard now to contend, with this ſtrong man, to bind this Prince of darkneſs in Chains, and to Fetter him in Links of Iron? Let us not then procraſtinate nor delay repentance, till we be ready to give up the Ghoſt, leſt the habits of

Rom. 7. 21, 23, 25.

ſin

ſin become of that ſtubborn, and irrefragable nature, which will puzzle, if not baffle our Skill and Power to deal with it. When Spiritual wickedneſſes are got in to high places, it will be no eaſie matter to do with them, (as 'tis ſaid of the Woman in the *Revelation*,) to put them under our feet; It will be much more eaſie to get out of this Mire and Clay, when we are up to the ankles, than when (with the Prophet *Jeremiah*) we are up to the arm pits. It is dangerous then to defer our inquiry after forgiveneſs in reſpect of what is previous to it, *viz.* Repentance, for the further progreſs we make in ſin, the harder will our return be, and except we repent we muſt all likewiſe periſh. But Secondly,

2. Let us not defer it too long. Becauſe [it will be much more difficult and hard to obtain favour at Gods hand, nay dangerous to be totally excluded.] A preſumptuous courſe of ſin will be very exaſperating of divine vengeance to our deſtruction, we ſhall not dare to appear before that God whom we have long offended, too highly affronted, ſo often grieved, ſo deſpitefully uſed. Wherewithal ſhall we come before him? We may ſay, but in another ſenſe than the Spouſe

2. In reſpect of God who is to grant our pardon.

meant it, 'Turn away thy Face, thine Eyes from me, for they will overcome me. 'Tis reported of *Octavius Cæsar*, that when one of his Souldiers turned away his face from him, he gave this reason of it, *Quia oculorum tuorum fulmen ferre non possum.* Such will the face of God be when he sets it against the sinner, to destroy him. It blasts him with his appearance.

Justin. Hist. Eutrop. de rebus. Rom. lib. 7.

To that height do these bellows, (*viz.* Repeated and continued acts of sin) blow the fire of divine wrath, that it will take much water, many tears of repentance to extinguish it. We shall find that mercy slighted, patience abused, is neither gentle, nor easy to be entreated. My Spirit, saith the Lord, shall not alwaies strive with mankind, because he is but flesh. When the Lord (as he complains) be wearied with our iniquities, it may be a long time before he arises, he and the Ark of his strength to come and save us. If we make him serve with our sins; He may justly make us wait at the Posts of his door, till our heads be wet with the drops, and our hair with the dew of the night; before the door of Salvation, that everlasting Gate, be opened to us. *Absolom* found, that his presumptuous offence, had so far disob-

liged

liged his Father, that he was not preſently, nor eaſily reſtored to the Royal City *Jeruſalem.* After which it muſt be ſome years before he could be admitted to ſee the Kings face. Nay who knows but continued provocations may occaſion a total and everlaſting excluſion from the preſence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power? Such danger is there in delay. If thou deferreſt till the evening of the day, this Sun may deſcend out of thy ſight, ſet in a Cloud, and riſe no more. If thou beeſt twice dead, pluckt up by the roots, the Lord may paſs an everlaſting curſe upon thee, and ſay, Never fruit grow more on thee for ever. The fooliſh Virgins in the Goſpel, being wedded to their own ſloth and folly, experimented this truth, and fatal event of their inexcuſable delays, and dallying till an everlaſting night overtook them, involved them in darkneſs, and though light was ſown for them, yet were totally defeated of their expectations, and deſires of that future crop. How prudent was *Joabs* conſideration in diſſuading *David* from going with the Army? Thou, ſaith he, art worth ten thouſand of us, and if the King miſcarry, the Crown muſt neceſſarily fall from the head of the people. If the breath of their noſtrils were ſtopt; If the Light of *Iſrael* were extinguiſhed, how

dark and dismal must their condition be? And therefore to prevent this danger it was thought fit, that the King should continue in his own cieled house, and not go into a flitching tabernacle. Our soul is the breath of our nostrils, the Light of our Eyes, she that sways the Scepter, and that bears a Soveraign authority over the man, and that sits in him as a Queen; She's worth ten thousand of all he hath besides, the whole world is too mean an exchange for it. What folly is it then to expose it to the utmost hazard, to venture the Ark of our strength till it be carried away by the Philistines, those Lusts that War against it, and led Captive by *Satan* at his will? What ever others do, let us be wise. Sin hath bored many an hole in our Vessel, oh let us stop the leck in time, else it may endanger, nay it will certainly sink it, which is most richly laden, our Soul, our everlasting life and welfare, which are of great price and value are on board. A *Cargo* that the world it self cannot reinburse or compensate, if it miscarries, (as hath been already said.) Oh let us not slumber then, let's not go down into the sides of this Ship, and Sleep; Let us rather say, Awake Lute and Harp, we our selves will awake right early, lest we sleep the sleep of death, and then who shall pardon

our

our tranſgreſſions and take away our iniquities; For if in the morning when we ſhall appear before the Judgment ſeat, we be not found having Chriſt's righteouſneſs, we ſhall be loſt, undone for ever.

But as it is our wiſdom to ſeek after pardon early: So in the next place let us be adviſed [to ſeek it *Earneſtly.*] The Effectual fervent prayer of the righteous availeth much. 3. Exhort. Seek it Earneſtly. The Expoſtulatory form of *Jobs* prayer teacheth this leſſon. God hath curſed every one that doth his work negligently. And there's little expectation that he can be bleſſed, which does his own (Eſpecially of this nature) ſlothfully. As the Hart panteth after the water brooks, ſo let our Souls thirſt after God for pardon. What a paſſion was *Laban* in, when he had loſt his Images. With what diligence did the Woman ſweep every corner of her houſe when her groat was loſt. Sinner, it's thy caſe. Thy ſin hath robbed thee of thy Soul, nay it hath taken away thy God from thee, *Iſa.* 59. 2. *Your Iniquities have ſeparated betwixt you and your God, your ſins have hid his face from you, that he will not hear.* Ariſe then, and let thy heart make diligent ſearch after him, give thy ſelf no reſt till thou haſt found him whom thy Soul loveth. With

what diligence did the *Athenians* and strangers enquire after new things, turning over every stone, to see if they could find something under it they had not yet been acquainted with, some Philosophical *Idea*. How close would they creep into natures bosom, prying, if possible, into the very breast of it, to search or find out some *Cryptical*, and hidden notions? How industriously did they strive to be of her Councel? And ambitious to be admitted *à secretioribus*, watching daily at her Gates, and waiting at the Posts of her doors? This made the *Epicureans* and *Stoicks* hurry St. *Paul* to *Areopagus*, saying, May we know what this Doctrine whereof thou speakest is? Very hungry they were of any new Light, it was the very *pabulum animæ*. With *Darius* his horse they were ready to neigh, to Triumph at the rising of the Sun, and to rejoyce at the Revelation of any new Science, though falsly so called. And shall the Children of Light sit in darkness, and content themselves with those Shades? Can the Daughter of *Sion* be covered with a Cloud, and not desire to have that vail taken from her? Canst thou with the Priest or Levite, take a view of thy self, see thy condition forlorn and deplorable, and pass by on the other side, without any

Acts 17. 19, 20.

any regard to thy own Soul? Oh that thoſe who lift up their voice like a Trumpet might awake the dead, the drowſy ſinner, that he might ariſe, and ſtand up from the dead, that Chriſt might give him life, that the Lord may pardon his ſin, *&c.* Awake then, thou that ſlumbreſt, doſt thou fold thy hands to ſleep, when the tares are ſowing in thy field, ſprung up, nay ready to be bound up in bundles for the fire; and wilt thou ſtand ſtill, till thy field be reapt, the Lords floor purged, and thou become as ſtubble before devouring fire, and as Chaff before the Whirlwind? Remember how the Spouſe ſought him whom her Soul loved, and traced him by the footſteps of the flock. Conſider how *David* watered his Couch with his tears, they ran down upon his cheeks, the apple of his Eye never ceaſed, *Pſal.* 64. 4. *Return, Oh Lord, deliver my Soul, Oh ſave me for thy mercy ſake.* 6. v. *I am weary with my groanings, all the night I make my bed to ſwim, I water my Couch with my tears.* Call to mind how *Jacob* wreſtled with the Lord, till the day broke. He held him and would not let him go till he bleſt him. Let thy Soul thirſt after God, after the living God, not the God of this world, which earthly men adore, becauſe they mind only earthly things. Let them hunt and enquire after their aſſes, mind thou the things of the Kingdom.

what diligence did the *Athenians* and strangers enquire after new things, turning over every stone, to see if they could find something under it they had not yet been acquainted with, some Philosophical *Idea*. How close would they creep into natures bosom, prying, if possible, into the very breast of it, to search or find out some *Cryptical*, and hidden notions? How industriously did they strive to be of her Councel? And ambitious to be admitted *à secretioribus*, watching daily at her Gates, and waiting at the Posts of her doors? This made the *Epicureans* and *Stoicks* hurry St. *Paul* to *Areopagus*, saying, May we know what this Doctrine whereof thou speakest is? Very hungry they were of any new Light, it was the very *pabulum animæ*. With *Darius* his horse they were ready to neigh, to Triumph at the rising of the Sun, and to rejoyce at the Revelation of any new Science, though falsly so called. And shall the Children of Light sit in darkness, and content themselves with those Shades? Can the Daughter of *Sion* be covered with a Cloud, and not desire to have that vail taken from her? Canst thou with the Priest or Levite, take a view of thy self, see thy condition forlorn and deplorable, and pass by on the other side, without any

Acts 17. 19, 20.

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dom. Remember with what zeal and prudence *Abigal* went out to meet *David*, and to attone his wrath, appeaſe his anger and divert that ruine which was determined againſt her ſelf and family. Sinner, thou art the man; Thy ſentence is paſt, the Lord is coming out againſt thee, to deſtroy thee, there will not any thing be left of thee before the morning Light, for then thou ſhalt be ſought for and not be found. Ariſe, go out, meet the Lord, carry him a preſent, give thy ſelf to him, give him thy heart, plead with him earneſtly, tell him it will not repent him, if he ſtops his hand from Shedding that blood, which the blood of Chriſt hath made innocent. Tell him thou art fooliſh and haſt juſtly offended him. But deſire the Lord not to regard thy offence. Tell him thou art a man of *Belial*, and folly is with thee. But deſire him to forgive thy treſpaſs. Enter into thy Cloſet, and there Commune with the Lord and be not ſtill. Do as *Hannah* did, plead in the bitterneſs of thy heart, and weep ſore. Say, If the Lord will look upon the affliction of his Servant, and remember thee, and not forget his Servant, but will give thee the pardon of thy ſins: Then thou wilt give up thy ſelf to him all the days of thy life. Aſſure thy ſelf ſuch prayers will be no dry breaſt, nor barren womb.

womb. It proved no abortive thing to *Hannah.* She conceived and ſo ſhalt thou, and bring forth that which will rejoyce thy heart, notwithſtanding all the pangs which thou haſt felt in the new birth. I hope I need not rifle any Topick to find arguments, to enforce this ſpiritual fervency, and urge a zealous inqueſt after that which is the univerſal wiſh and Catholick deſire of every one who believes that acrimony and venom (I mean the puniſhment and guilt) with which ſin is tinctured, and imbittered, this, like the *Manna* in the wilderneſs, is ſuitable to the guſt of every palate. There being none ever yet to be met with that could find any pleaſure in torment, or guilty of ſo much folly as to ſay, Soul take thine eaſe, thou haſt treaſures of wrath laid up for many years; Some falſe ſcents then ſure there muſt be, which divert our purſuit, and take off our inqueſt after ſo great a Game as that *Job* hath ſtarted, and whom we find purſuing with very eager and ſtrong cries; Why doſt thou not pardon my tranſgreſſion, *&c.* But ſuch is the folly of ſome men, that their Edge and Earneſtneſs in ſeeking after pardon are ſometimes blunted and abated,

1. [By a miſconception (or rather total annihilation) of divine Juſtice.] They pull down

down Gods Tribunal, to Build his Mercy-Seat with; Fancying his Sword of Justice to be sheathed, and will never be furbished to wound the Head of his Enemies, or the hairy Scalp of him that goes on in his trespasses. These wipe away tears from their Eyes, as supposing there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain, for the former things are passed away, *Rev.* 21. 13. As if he who made the Heavens and the Earth, designed no Hell to punish the impenitent and guilty person. They imagine that God is all love, and that he never makes his Creature to damn it. That this Potter never frames any Vessels of wrath, or fits them for destruction. Thus they make a Covenant with death, and with Hell they are at an agreement; taking it for granted that he is too kind to dissolve it, too merciful to cassate the Bargain, and render it of none effect. Upon which suppositions they trouble not their Heads with that which so much affected *Job*'s, but hoist up their main Sail to the wind of pleasure, loose the Rudder-bands of a profane and dissolute life, suffering the Vessel of their Souls to drive where any wind, or waves of temptation carry it, till they unexpectedly dash against the Rock, and are broken in pieces with the force of those waves

which

which they fancied were too calm to be raiſed into a Storm. When the bitterneſs of death is thus paſt from a ſinner, (as it was from *Agag*) he makes no ſupplications to the Lord, no more than he to *Samuel*. He arrays himſelf delicately, he fares deliciouſly, he eats, drinks, and is merry, laying himſelf down upon this ſoft and downy truth, *viz.* That God is merciful and kind, and here he ſleeps ſecurely, propheſying well concerning himſelf. *Per me equidem ſunt omnia protinus alba.* Men of this ſort fancy that they are rich, and want nothing; ſo far relying upon the wiſdom and love of this Maſter-builder, in framing his Church with ſuch Battlements as they imagine, will ſecure their ſtation, which makes them careleſs of their ſtanding: For they think they cannot fall, or if they do, that the Lord will take no advantage of them when they are down, but will raiſe them up again. To his conduct and kindneſs they commit themſelves, whom they preſume to bring it to paſs. Theſe are they who ſtrangle themſelves with the cords of divine love, feeding upon this Manna, I mean the mercy of God, till they eat judgment to themſelves, or by ill digeſtions of his Providence incur that Spiritual diſtemper, of neglect and ſlothfulneſs in

Perſius. ſat. i.

in what ſo highly concerns them, earneſtly to enquire after; but that God is juſt as well as merciful, the daily methods of his Providence do evince beyond any rational denial; That the Soul which ſins muſt dye is a truth of that maſs, and exceeding weight that none can queſtion it; and though the profane and diſſolute part of the World would fain have it falſe, (whilſt they know 'tis their intereſt it ſhould not be true) yet ſuch is the force of it, that we may ſay as the Poet in another caſe,

Expellas furcâ licet uſque recurrat.

It will rebound, fly back in their Faces, and give the Lie to them, that ſhall have the folly to deny it; ſo that he who will eſcape wrath to come, muſt labour as for Life, he muſt ſtrive earneſtly as *Job* doth for pardon.

2. Some are careleſs and incurious as to this main concern, whilſt they deceive and flatter themſelves with the Opinion, [that the grace of God is free,] and need not be ſo induſtriouſly ſought after; as if it would be found of thoſe which ſeek it not, or make little inquiry after it; reſolved to take the advice which was once upon an extraordinary account

account given to *Iſrael*, they'll ſtand ſtill, and think to ſee the Salvation of God, nor ſet one ſtep towards the heavenly Mount, it will come to them, nor trouble themſelves to climb the Tree of Life, that Fruit will drop into their Mouths, and fall into their Laps without any pains to gather it. They will not ſpin, yet verily they ſhall be clothed; they will not ſow, yet verily they ſhall be fed; that the grace of God is free, the Experience and Faith of the Saints puts out of queſtion, yet 'tis never ſo profuſely diſpenſed, as to diſcharge our juſt endeavours to gain it, or ſuperſede our inquiries after it. There is a Well-ſpring of Life, but we muſt come to it, and bring a Bucket to draw with, that is Faith and Prayer, or we may go away athirſt and never be ſatisfied. There is water of Life in the Fountain, but we muſt pump it up, before we can taſte it. Gold there is in the Mine, and as the Scripture ſaith, there is a Vein for the Silver, but we muſt dig deep to gain it. God will blot out iniquity, nevertheleſs, thus ſaith the Lord, (I may apply the words of the Prophet in this caſe,) Ezek. 36.37. *I will yet be enquired of for this by the Houſe of* Iſrael, *to do it for them.* There is pardon granted, but it muſt be ſued out before it be ſealed: For which this upright man

man was so earnest a Suitor at the Throne of Grace; Why dost thou not pardon my transgression, *&c.*

3. [Sometimes the World clogs and hinders us in our earnest search and diligent inquiry after God.] Let us put it under our Feet, else it will prove a stumbling Block before us.

First, As a Friend.

Which I shall consider, First, As it is a Friend and flatters. This *Dalilah* lodged in our Bosom, will cut off our Locks, rob us of our activity and strength, by which we should seek after God. If the World draw us it will prove so great an intanglement that we shall find it difficult to run after him. The Bird of Paradise having this weight tied to the Leg of it, will find it hard to flee away and be at rest; when at any time it ventures to ascend Heavenward, the Magnetick virtue of the Earth, draws it back to the Center of it.

Love is a great attractive, a Vail that covers a multitude of faults; a Glass which sets a gloss upon the greatest deformity. 'Tis an Amulet that so far Enchants us, as to make us catch at nothing, grasp a Cloud, embrace a Dunghil. *Quisquis amat ranam, &c.*

This made the Cardinal prefer his Lot in *Paris*, before a share in Paradice. He thought it was good, nay best for him to be there, let

let me here Build my Tabernacle. The worldly man who hath his portion in this Life is ready to ſay, My Lot is fallen to me in a pleaſant place, I have a goodly Heritage. Thoſe whom Wealth and Honour have ſwelled and puffed up, think themſelves ſufficiently appay'd and ſatisfied without any further inquiries; being of the ſame temper with him the Poet mentions.

Jupiter, aſſerui terram mihi, tu aſſere Cœlum. As long as he hath the good things of this World, take Heaven that fancy it. The looſe and laſcivious lives of men ſpeak no other nor better language, or at leaſt the thoughts and conſiderations of an everlaſting ſtate are too often loſt in the croud of worldly pleaſures. They drink Wine in Bowls, and drown all theſe cares in the bottom of them; forgetting their debts, they ſcarce remember to pray the Lord to forgive his debtors, *viz.* to pardon their iniquities, and to take away their tranſgreſſions.

The World hinders our purſuit and inquiry after God. [First, By way of diverſion.] It turns the ſtreams of mens endeavours another way. They labour earneſtly, but 'tis not in the Lord's Vineyard, and ſpend their Money for that which is not Bread; they go about the City making ſtrong

cries, and diligent inquiries after that which their Souls love, and what is that, but to satiate their Lusts, and gorge their sinful Appetites? What pains did *Ammon* take? but it was to circumvent *Tamar*, to defile his Sister. How busie and full of forecast was *Jezebel*? but it was to supplant *Naboth*, and possess his Vineyard. Thus do men toyl and spin, and all is to clothe themselves with Garments spotted with the Flesh. Their Language is not, Let us go up to the House of the Lord, to the Mountain of the God of *Jacob*, but rather into such a City, and continue there to buy and sell, and get gain. Jam. 4. 13. Others stretch themselves upon their Beds of Ivory, that they may take their fill of pleasure, solace themselves with love, and like Swine wallow themselves in the mire. Thus whilst the Soul moves in the Circles of worldly Inchantments, they become extravagant in their courses, excentrical in their motions, they take great pains to bend and draw their Bows, but their Eyes are distorted with beholding vanity, and gazing so stedfastly upon Earthly Objects; they take their aim amiss for Heaven, so that they never hit the mark of the price of the high calling.

2. The World hinders us in our pursuit and endeavours after pardon and reconciliation

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tion [by way of ſatisfaction,] having drunk of the old Wine, which is preſt from theſe wild Grapes, they deſire not to taſte of the new with our Saviour in the Kingdom of Heaven. They glut themſelves with the Fleſh-pots of *Egypt*; and then as for the hidden Manna, they account it light Bread, their Souls loath it. The *Gadarens* deſired no better Meat than Swines Fleſh, and therefore when their Hogs were in danger, they deſired Chriſt the Lamb of God to go out of their Coaſts; theſe are ſuch as the Prophet mentions, *Amos* 2. 7. that pant after the duſt of the Earth, and when their Bellies are filled with thoſe hid Treaſures, they are content and ſatisfied. If theſe Swine can wallow in the Mire, and lade themſelves with thick Clay, they ask no more, 'tis their heavy Purſes make their Hearts light. If a man will but ſhow them any good, they never deſire the light of Gods countenance; if the World ſhines or ſmiles upon them, the favour thereof is better than Life; let them but drink of the Rivers of pleaſure which are at the Worlds right hand, and they appeaſe their thirſt better than the waters of Life. *Abna* and *Pharphar* they account as good as the waters of *Jordan*. If they may but dwell here in an Houſe of Cedar, they are never ambitious of

any better Inheritance, or to take a Lease of that ἀχειροποίητον οἰκείαν, an House not made with hands eternally in the Heavens. If they have once found these hid treasures they think themselves rich, and that they want nothing. Their wish is that the World would say to them as *Ahab* to *Benhadad*, *Behold I am thine, and all that I have*, which makes him sing his *Nunc dimittis*, and to depart in peace though his Eyes behold no other Salvation. Having these things he thinks he possesseth all things. Here he feeds to the full, and his Eyes stand out with fatness. He hath all that his Heart can wish; he hath enough, let *Ziba* take all if he will, he desires no more; let *Job* trouble his Head with the pardon of his sin before he dies: If he can gain these things he thinks himself as happy as if he had already attained, or were already perfect: This is the mark he ever aims at, the price of his highest calling, and if he can come at that he Barters no further, because he thinks himself sufficiently appaid.

2. As it is a Foe and frights.

2. [The World hinders as it is a Foe.] In the former sense, *viz.* as it appears a Friend it flatters, in this it frights; then it laid a Bait, now it strikes with the Hook, and pierceth them through with many cares. Knowing

ing the terrours thereof; we perſuade men not to be diſhear tned in their purſuit and inquiry after the Lord Jeſus Christ. Though we be preſſed down, and thronged with a multitude of them, yet let us not loſe him in the croud; if we can but come to touch the hem of his Garment, he will caſt the Skirt of it over us, and will hide the multitude of our ſins; but alas there's too many of the mind the Jews were of, *Let him come down from the Croſs, and we will believe on him.* They could be contented to know Chriſt, but they care not for him Crucified. The Roſe of *Sharon* hath ſo rough and prickly a ſtalk, that they had rather be ignorant, than gain knowledge at ſo dear a rate: They would not willingly be taught like the men of *Succoth* with Briars and Thorns. And ſuch is the diſcipline of it many times. Sometimes it makes a whip of no ſmall Cords, and drives men out of the Temple of Honour, and lays their glory in the duſt. How often hath it poured out contempt upon Princes, till their Cup overflows, and diſgrace runs down to the very skirts of their Garments; ſometimes it is a Thief that breaks in and ſteals away their richeſt Treaſures. The World ſometimes ſends the Canker and the Palmer-worm into our Eſtates, which frets out their very Bowels; ſome-

times a Fire, that turns all our Beauty into Ashes, sometimes a Wind that overturns the strongest Buildings, and casts down our Nests though Built upon a Rock. This is the *Chaldean* and the *Sabean*; every thing that is evil. Now to keep the hand upon the Helm, and to steer a steady course in so great a Storm, requires no little resolution and skill, especially when the mind is like a troubled Sea, and the waves thereof roar, we can be in no stedfast condition, but stagger and reel to and fro like a drunken man. When it remembers God it is troubled; but God is but little in all a worldly man's thoughts. He Buys, he Sells, he Marries, and is given in Marriage, involved in the cares, and swallowed up in the perplexities of it: These are the Briars and Thorns which choak the best Seed. In this croud and press it is that we lose our Saviour and our Souls, yea all that is dear to us. *Pilate* was very loth to deliver Jesus to be Crucified, till he saw it was like to endanger his reputation with men, *If thou let this man go thou art none of* Cæsar's *Friend*, and to what account such an Estimate might amount he knew not; only he was resolved to betray his Saviour, and give him up to a popular fury, rather than himself to reproach, (that strife of Tongues) and train of

miſchiefs which the diſpleaſure of his Prince might occaſion. Thoſe that labour under this Diſtemper we find readier to ſeek to this Phyſician of no value than after God; but *Job* was of another mind and meaning. He does not here conſider the loſs of his Eſtate, his complaint is not for his Sheep and Oxen. Oh! what ſhall I do for my Camels and Aſſes, for my Sons and Daughters? what! muſt I die Childleſs? muſt I like the Eunuch be as a dry Tree? muſt my name quite be blotted out from under Heaven? This was not his concern, theſe were not the words of his complaint. He was deſirous of a new name, which was better than that of Sons and Daughters. Methinks this patient man aroſe like *Sampſon*, and ſhook himſelf, he caſt off all thoſe troubles: Though they might be great and heavy upon him, yet he was preſt with things of a far greater weight, tranſgreſſions, iniquities. Whoever then thou art that laboureſt under troubles, hath the Lord taken from thee thy Camels and Aſſes, thy Sheep and Oxen? Art thou bereaved of thy Children? then indeed thou art bereaved; have the Plowers plowed, and made deep furrows upon thy Back? do not bury thy Soul there; let not thy Conſcience when it comes to repreſent and ſtate thy ſpiritual con-

dition to thee be sent away till some other time, or more convenient season. When thine Heart shall tell thee thou art upon the brink of the Pit, that the great and terrible day of the Lord is at hand, that secret things shall be revealed, and the Books shall be opened, where thou standest charged with very great sums, and a large account. Suffer not the noise and tumult of worldly cares to drown this still voice, which if attended to, speaks better things to thee than the Blood of *Abel*. Let not the terrors and evils of it make thee either afraid, or ashamed to be religious; 'tis no shame, 'tis no folly to be wise to Salvation. Do not like the Parents of the Blind man in the Gospel, who feared to own Christ because of the Jews; this was St. *Peter*'s fault, that rather denied his Master than run the hazard of being persecuted for his name sake; these are the effects and unhappy consequences of worldly troubles, they will take up too much of thy Heart, thy time, thy pains, that thou wilt be scarce at leisure to call upon the Lord to pardon thy sin. If thou entereſt into thy Closet, there turmoils will croud in after thee; if thou goest into the Temple, thither they will dog thee, there they will bait thee; if thou lyest down they are ever with thee; if thou risest up they

are thoſe *mali genii* that will ever haunt and diſtract thee. Let us then uſe the world as though we uſed it not, let us poſſeſs as though we enjoyed not. Thoſe that have Eſtates as though they had none, thoſe that mourn as though they lamented not, for if once it gains that triumph over us as by its frowns to affright and awe us, we become its abſolute Vaſſals. 'Twill become a Centurion that will render us at its perfect Beck and Command. If it bid us go we muſt go, if it bid us come we muſt come, or do this we muſt do it. Though we leave the moſt neceſſary and indiſpenſible work we have to do, undone. Namely to gain reconciliation and favour with God: That he may pardon our tranſgreſſions, and take away our iniquities.

4. Exhort. Give me leave to ſpeak one word to you who upon your earneſt and diligent ſearch after pardon, have gain'd it at the Lords hand, you whoſe iniquities are pardoned and ſins forgiven, here's a word of Counſel and advice for you.

1. [Be thankful.] Take the Cup of Salvation into your hands, and call upon the name of the Lord, call to one and other, and tell what the Lord hath done for your Souls. Declare his goodneſs to the Children of men, tell it in *Gath* publiſh it in the Streets of *Askelon*.

Askelon. Hast thou found thy lost groat thy Soul? Call in thy Neighbours, rejoyce, and make merry; was thy soul dead and is it alive again; was it lost and is it found? Sing praises to the Lord, make a joyful noise to the Rock of thy Salvation. That those who come under thy Window may hear the voice of joy and gladness. Then sang *Deborah* and *Barak* the Son of *Abinoam* on that day, saying, Judg. 5. 1. Praise the Lord for avenging of *Israel.* Let me speak to him that hath fought the good fight, that hath gained the Victory in the day of battel, arise, utter a Song; Praise the Lord for avenging thee, when thou didst willingly offer thy self. Thou that handlest the pen of a ready writer, write up the name of the Lord; engrave with the point of a Diamond his righteous acts towards thee, who hath caused thee to Triumph over the mighty, who hath bound the Prince of darkness in Chains, and all thy Spiritual wickedness in Links of Iron, and hath given thee dominion over those Nobles, yea thy Soul hath trodden down strength. Here let us be careful to give God the praise and glory of all our Salvation and deliverance. Have we caught a full draught of mercy, let us be sure not to Sacrifice to our own net. You know what *Jacob* replyed

to

to *Iſaac*, when he enquired how he came by his Veniſon ſo ſoon: He ſaid, The Lord brought it. If thou be askt how thou cameſt by thy Veniſon, ſay it was not thy bow, nor by thy ſtrength, or ſwiftneſs of thy legs, that thou haſt hunted down and overtaken this bleſſing, it was the Lord that brought it. Alas we may fiſh all night and catch nothing, if the Lord Jeſus Chriſt do not bring the fiſh to our drog. 'Tis true thy prayers and thine alms may come up before the Lord, and theſe he may enter into his book, but 'tis only Chriſt's merits that can ballance the account. 'Tis true thy tears are not loſt, for he puts them into his bottle, but 'tis only his own blood wherein he dips his pen, that Croſſes Gods Book, and blots out our iniquities: Art thou arrived at the Land of *Canaan*? you muſt own that 'tis not thine own legs, but the Lord himſelf who hath brought thee hitherto. It was juſtly ill taken that among ten cleanſed Lepers there ſhould be but one thankful one. Chriſtian, hath the Lord cleanſed thee from thy Spiritual Leproſies? Hath he ſaid, I will be thou clean? Go to thy High Prieſt and offer a Sacrifice of praiſe for thy cleanſing. Hath the Lord forgiven thee much? Love him much.

Q. *But*

Q. *But how may I express my thankfulness?*

R. 1. In admiration of that goodness which hath discharged thy present scores.

2. By taking a provident and prudent course, not to incur a future debt.

1. [Admire that goodness that hath discharged and acquitted thy present score.] He might have cast thee into the Prison of Hell till thou hadst paid the utmost farthing; Had he taken thee by the throat and said, Pay me what thou owest, he had done thee no wrong, but instead thereof he hath frankly forgiven thee all, cancelled the obligation, discharged the principal, upon the payment which our Surety hath made, the Lord Jesus Christ his own Son, designed from the beginning, and constituted to be a ransom for sin. Before the Foundation of the World, this corner Stone was laid, from whence his Church hath grown up as a building fitly framed, making us who are his Sons and Daughters as the polisht corners of his Temple, building of us up as a Sanctuary for his name, in which he hath made us a Royal Priesthood, resetling that Crown which was fallen from our heads, and raised up the Tabernacle of *David* which was fallen. We were dropt into the mire of sin, where like Swine we lay wallowing in our defilement. Like leopards we were stained with

with many Spots. Perhaps we have been Extortioners, Drunkards, Effeminate Perſons, Covetous, Revilers. But we are waſht, but we are Sanctified, but we are juſtified in the name of the Lord Jeſus Chriſt, and by the Spirit of our God. Now to him that hath waſht us from our ſins in his own blood, and made us Kings and Prieſts unto God and his Father, to him be glory and dominion for ever and ever. *Amen.* He hath taken pleaſure in his people, and hath beautified the meek with Salvation. Thus hath the Lord cauſed that face to Shine which was covered with a Cloud; The Sun of righteouſneſs is ariſen, and hath ſcattered thoſe miſts which cauſed us to ſit in darkneſs. Yea when we were in the Valley of the Shadow of death, Light ſprang up. Oh let us ſit upon thoſe tender branches ſinging praiſe to the Lord, and making a joyful noiſe to him who is the Rock of our Salvation, from hence was our deliverance hewn, from the hole of this bottomleſs pit, (I mean) of the wiſdom and Love of God was our redemption taken. It laid ſo deep, that dig it out we could not, and to beg it we were aſhamed. For who could or durſt have appeared before the Lord to ſay as *Job* did, Why doſt thou not pardon my tranſgreſſion, and take away mine iniquities?

Pſal. 149. 4.

iniquities? If by Christ's blood there had not had been a new and living way consecrated by which we might have access with boldness to the Throne of grace; this *Blastus* the King's Chamberlain, I mean, the Lord Jesus Christ being our Friend, we are admitted into this great presence; But there is none which comes to the Father but by him. For he was the very way, yea and light too, to conduct us to him. Should we now hold our peace and not declare what the Lord hath done for us, the very Stones in the Street, would cry out against us. He hath given to his people a white Stone and a new name which can never be blotted out. St. *John* seemed transported with this very consideration. Behold, saith he, what manner of Love the Father hath bestowed upon us that we should be called the Sons of God? They were the Children of wrath, but they are re-baptized, a new name is given them, *viz.* Of Sons and Daughters of the most high God. Shall they not then call upon the name of the Lord in such an acceptable time, and for such unspeakable Love as this? What manner of Love this is St. *John* doth not, nor we cannot tell. This we know, 'tis as high as Heaven, for thither it raiseth us: As deep as Hell, for from thence it redeemed

1 Joh. 3. 1.

redeemed us. The Heavens were ſhut up againſt us, they were become as Braſs, not to be moved or entreated by us. Hell enlarged it ſelf and opened her mouth wide upon us, it was ready to ſwallow us. And no wonder, for our Conſciences accuſed us, our own hearts condemned us. Nay, God who is greater than both, hath according to his righteous Law given judgment againſt us. But thanks be to the Lord Jeſus Chriſt who with a ſtrong hand, with a great deliverance and mighty Salvation, hath reſcued us from the jaws of eternal death, plucking us as a prey from its teeth. We had contracted a ſurfeit with eating the forbidden fruit, a Leproſy which overſpread us from the Crown of the head to the ſole of the Foot. But he hath cleanſed us from this Spiritual defilement by waſhing us in his own blood, to which the waters of *Abna* and *Pharphar* are no way comparable: Nor any Phyſitian like to ours who hath healed ſo old and inveterate a diſtemper. He hath cured the wounded conſcience, and bound up the broken hearted. He ſpoke peace in a day of trouble, he hath ſaid, Be of good comfort, thy ſins are forgiven. What can we do leſs then ſtand up as the Levites did, to bleſs the Lord God of *Iſrael* with

2 Chron. 20. 19.

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a loud voice on high in the beauty of holineſs.

2. Shew thy thankfulneſs, [by being more provident and prudent than to incur the like debts for the future.] Play not with that fire in which thou haſt been already ſcorched. Take heed you come not near the hole of that Aſp that hath ſo much venom and poiſon under its tongue. Hath much been forgiven thee? Love God much, and hate ſin more than ever. He that praiſeth the Lord glorifies him, and he that ordereth his converſation aright ſhall ſee the Salvation of God. This latter is that eye-ſalve which will give us a Proſpect of Heaven, and prove a more acceptable thank-offering than the beaſts of a thouſand Hills. Hath the Lord ſent the Angel of the new Covenant, and taken us out of *Sodom*? Let us not ſo much as look (much leſs return) back again. If we do, our latter Errour will be worſe than the firſt, and become a ſin of a double dye. Are our garments waſhed in the blood of the Lamb? Let us not again ſuffer them to be ſpotted with the fleſh. Say with the Spouſe I have put off my Coat my filthy garments, how ſhall I put them on? I have waſhed mine hands in innocency, how ſhall I defile them? I have taſted the good word of life; how ſhall I eat thoſe things

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that are common and unclean? Hath thy heavenly Father called thee home? hath he ſet thee at his own Table, and fed thee with the fineſt of the wheat, put the Robe of his righteouſneſs upon thee, a Ring upon thy Finger? hath he wedded thee, and made thee the Bride, the Lamb's Wife? do not any more forſake him; do not wander from thy Father's houſe into a ſtrange Country; If thou doſt, who knows whether ever the Lord will invite thee to return. If thou ſhalt again harden thy heart and make thy neck ſtiff againſt him, 'tis to be feared he will not fall upon it, and kiſs thee. How difficult, yea deſperate a cure Relapſes of this nature are, the Author to the *Hebrews* hath with no ſmall evidence and terrour to Apoſtates denounced. For 'tis impoſſible for thoſe who were once enlightned, and have taſted of the holy gift, and were partakers of the Holy Ghoſt, and have taſted of the good word of life and the power of the World to come, if they ſhall fall away, to renew them again to repentance, ſeeing they have Crucified to themſelves the Son of God afreſh, and put him to an open ſhame. If ever any writing upon the Wall can make an heart ſhake, or knees knock together, it is this. If the ſhadow be gone

Luk. 15. 20.

Heb. 6. 4.

down the Dial, 'tis impossible to reduce it. Expectation and hope is pluckt up by the very Root; nor is there any Stump left from whence any future welfare can arise and spring. Apostacy is a worm which makes our goads like *Jonas*'s wither from the very Root. The Apostle gives the reason of it.

1. [There can be no renewal to repentance;] And then transgression cannot be pardoned, nor sin taken away. Now if the way to heaven be hedged up, how shall we ever come to the door of hope to knock for entrance? If Salvation be stifled in its very conception, we cannot be regenerate nor born again. And except a man be born again, he cannot enter into the Kingdom of Heaven.

2. This backsliding [Crucifies our Saviour afresh,] which wounds are those that render ours incurable. The piercing his side again, strikes our own Souls under the fifth rib; There's near a blow we give him but 'tis through our own loyns. How shall we escape if we neglect (much more if we despise) the Salvation he hath prepared for us? Sins of this nature are double hatched, of that engrained dye, that the Spots seldom are gotten out. They have corrupted themselves, their

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ſpot is not the ſpot of his Children, they are a crooked and perverſe Generation, *Deut.* 32. 5. which conſideration may make us very careful to take our Saviour's advice, *Go away, ſin no more, leſt worſe things befal thee. Non licet bis peccare.* To ſin againſt Gods Judgments is to kick againſt the pricks; but to abuſe his love, and to deſpiſe pardoning mercy, is to lift up the Heel, and to kick againſt thoſe Bowels of compaſſion, which the Lord puts on towards us, which have as proper a tendency to the ruin of the Soul, as he that plucks the Plaiſter from his wounds, and withſtands the means of their cure, takes the moſt effectual courſe to deſtroy the Body.

2. [Be joyful.] If any thing can bring glad tydings and great joy to thee, it muſt be this, that to thee a Son, a Saviour is Born, who is Jeſus that hath ſaved thee from thy ſins: Can he be reaſonably ſad, to whom he ſaith, Be of good comfort, thy ſins be forgiven thee? why ſhould he hang down his Head like a Bulruſh, when Chriſt is the root that bears him? Oh Daughter of *Sion!* why art thou ſo ſad, when there's Balm in *Gilead*, and a Phyſician there that can Cure the hurt of the Daughter of his people? The argument *Jezebel* uſed to *Ahab* in his melancholly mood, was no improper medium in his caſe,

Art not thou King of Iſrael? *Ariſe, eat Bread.* Let me ſpeak in the ſame Language to him that ſit in a deſolate diſconſolate ſtate, Art not thou a King, *viz.* one of that little Flock to which the Father hath promiſed to give the Kingdom? ariſe then, and eat thy Bread with cheerfulneſs, and drink thy Wine with a merry Heart. He hath brought thee into his Banqueting-houſe, nay, he hath laid thee in his Boſom, and the Banner he hath ſpread over thee is love. The Fool ſaid, *Soul, take thine eaſe, thou haſt Goods laid up for many years*; he was a Fool, becauſe he had no better Pillow to lye on, no ſofter Bed to reſt on, and yet he could fold his hands to ſleep, he laid down in peace and took his reſt, as if his full Barns could cauſe him to dwell in ſafety, and the Goods he had laid up were the only refuge from the fear of evil. Nor can it be a leſſer argument of imprudence (on the other hand) with *Rachel,* to refuſe to be comforted, under the greateſt aſſurances of ſafety. Is Chriſt in the Ship? then O you of little Faith, wherefore do you doubt of a ſafe arrival? is not the lading enſured? is not your Life hid with Chriſt in God? why art thou then caſt down Oh Soul? why art thou diſquieted within thee? why doſt thou water thy Couch with thy tears? doth not

not he make thy Bed for thee? why doth the Apple of thine Eye never ceaſe? Is it not always under the lid of his Providence? God hath anointed thee with the Oyl of gladneſs, why then doth not thy Face ſhine? (a) why is thy countenance fallen, appaled with every terror, frighted with every appearance of evil? 'Tis remarkable what the courage of *Leonidas* was, when he was told that the *Perſian* Archers were ſo numerous that their Arrows would darken the Sun. To which he thus unconcernedly replyed, Then we ſhall Fight in the Shade. And ſhall Morality out-vie Chriſtianity? muſt the Children of God be the only froward penſive Creatures, trembling at every blaſt, which the Prince of the power of the Air raiſeth? Shall common Fortitude and Bravery, manage and maintain the Spirit of an Heathen? and ſhall Religion be a fainter Cordial, leſs able to ſupport and inſpire with comfort and reſolution him that fights under Chriſt's Banner, though he be aſſaulted with a Legion of difficulties? doth the Lord ſhine upon thy Tabernacle? what Cloud then can eclipſe or darken it? hath he ſpoken peace to thee? what Tongue then can ſpeak trouble? hath

(a) *Scire velim quare toties mihi Nevole triſtis? Occurras fronte obductâ Iso. Satyr.*

he pardoned thy tranſgreſſions? who then can bring in any new impeachment againſt thee, or lay any thing to thy charge? hath he taken away thine iniquity, and broke thoſe Bonds in ſunder? this may, this will keep thine Heart whole. Hath he expunged or wip't out the ſcores thy ſins have contracted? this will wipe away all tears from thine Eyes.

1. Be joyful in the Lord, [for this will facilitate thy paſſage, and ſmooth thy way to Heaven.] The diſconſolate and mournful Chriſtian drives heavily towards the place of reſt, nay, ſometimes he ſits down and ſaith, Hitherto will I go and no further. This cheerful temper, this rejoicing in the Lord will be Oyl to the Wheels. He that hath the Cruſe of Comfort in his Breaſt, needs not any other Bag or Scrip with him, nor to have any recourſe to Forreign Complacencies or Divertiſements: Thus is a good man ſatisfied from himſelf; like the Teyl-tree and Oak the Prophet mentions, whoſe ſubſtance is in them when they caſt their Leaves; ſo the holy Seed ſhall be the ſubſtance thereof, *Iſa.* 6. 13. A good man hath his holy Seed in him; he hath a Spring of Spiritual joy flowing from the ſenſe of pardon and reconciliation with God, a Foun-

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tain of living waters in himſelf, which bubbles up with conſtant ſatisfaction. 'Tis a continual viaticum and refreſhment by the way, which, be it never ſo ſtreight, this enlargeth it, be it never ſo crooked, this will make it plain, it ſweetens the bittereſt Cup, it turns a Priſon into a Palace, and makes the Bird of Paradiſe ſing though in a Cage; ſo did *Paul* and *Silas*, though in Priſon, yet they did awake and utter a Song in a ſtrange Land. This made St. *Peter* and his Brethren, rejoice though they ſuffered, did I ſay *though*, nay, that they were accounted worthy to ſuffer for the name of Chriſt. Acts 5. 41. I may ſay of it as the Apoſtle ſpeaks of Faith; it ſtops the mouths of Lions, it quencheth the violence of Fire, it turns the edge of the Sword, and out of weakneſs they are made ſtrong. Are thy knees weak? this will ſtrengthen them; are thine hands weary? this, like the Pillars that were under *Moſes*'s, will ſupport and encourage them, when they are ſtretched towards Heaven, that they ſhall not flag nor faint in Prayer. Is there any Tongue enflamed or ſcorched in the Furnace of affliction? the tip of a Finger dipt in Spiritual joy that River of pleaſure, will allay the heat and torment of it. Like ſome palliating remedies, it ſtops

the ferment and ebullition, which occaſional affliction and trouble are apt to raiſe in a diſtempered mind, which is frequently by every blaſt apt to be caſt into heaps, the billows and waves of its paſſion running high, caſting out mire and dirt, and foaming with its own rage. But how great a pacification to this troubled Sea, is reconciliation and peace with God? it ſpeaks to the Soul when 'tis afflicted and toſſed with theſe tempeſts, raiſed by the cares and troubles of this world, peace, be ſtill; who then would not attend to ſuch a ſtill voice, which renders our paſſage ſo even, and entrance ſo eaſie into everlaſting life? This is a Medicine, (*viz.* joy in the Lord) that does *ſuaviter curare*, a remedy for our diſeaſe, which every man would heartily embrace as the end of all his pains. For who would not walk in thoſe ways, which are ways of pleaſantneſs, or account that a tedious travel when the very paths are peace? Indeed what can be otherwiſe to him, who knows that he is accepted of the Father? You know how indifferent *Mephiboſheth* was, when the King was returned back in peace, as to any thing elſe that might concern him. Let *Ziba* take all, *&c.* Methinks the Chriſtian may well ſay, ſeeing my God is returned to me in peace, let the men of the world take

take all, I value not the loſs of any thing, let me be ſtript as naked as *Job* was; let the *Zibas*'s of this World take the Land, ſeeing I have an inheritance with the Saints in light, I cannot ſit in darkneſs. I can be ſubject to no future attainders, ſeeing my Pardon is granted, and Patent ſealed by the Blood of Chriſt. A joy of this nature wipes away all tears upon other accounts from our Eyes, it turns our very croſſes into Crowns, and cauſeth us to rejoice even in tribulation; it makes our barren Wilderneſs a *Canaan*, and turns our dry Heath into a Pool of Waters. If this Breaſt of Conſolation be held out to us, every thing elſe will flow with Milk and Honey, or at leaſt ſo far ſweeten the Wormwood and the Gall of afflictions we meet with, that it will not ſeem grievous but joyous to taſte of it. Every pardoned ſinner may ſay, (let his Lot fall where it will) that he hath a goodly Heritage, whilſt the Stones of Emptineſs and Lines of confuſion are drawn over the richeſt portions and godlieſt palaces of wicked and guilty men. They value not to have their names written up for deſtruction among them, whilſt their names are written in the book of life; Such things move them not, neither count they their lives dear to them, when they are called

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to Sacrifice them to Gods honour and in testimony of his truth. The Lord having bestowed this great blessing (*Job* begs for) it drowns and swallows up all lesser occurrences. When the Lord guides their feet in the ways of peace, they can tread upon Serpents, trample upon Scorpions, neither fear, they any deadly thing, for it hath pleased the Lord to assure to them everlasting life, by pardoning their transgressions, and taking away their iniquity.

2. Be joyful [because this will make others labour to gain that which is productive of so great tranquility and peace.] Every one will strive to be admitted to the Supper of the Lamb, when they hear how obliging that entertainment is which others have been treated with. Who would not desire to tast of that Cup whose Wine rejoiceth the heart, and maketh a cheerful countenance? That Religion is a morose and Melancholy thing, is a stone of stumbling, that Rock of offence, which those who pretend a willingness to its entertainment are apt to object; That he who leads an holy life must never see good days; (The new birth is attended with nothing, but bitter pangs;) and therefore when they are invited to come into the Lords house, and to be admitted into his Family,

Family, they are ready to ſay, Depart from us we deſire not the knowledge of theſe ways. We care not to be treated at this paſſover, 'tis eaten with too bitter Herbs, and therefore they pray, they deſire to be excuſed; They delight not to go to the houſe of mourning, nor to live in that Clime which generates nothing but Storms and Tempeſts, Clouds and Pillars of ſmoak; this makes them flee from mount *Sinai*, as affording nothing but thundring and lightning, fire and terrour, which makes them ſay, Oh let not the Lord ſpeak to us! The terrours of his Law in this ſence diſſwading men, and diſcouraging them from fighting under his banner, as if nothing were to be gained but blows, as if the holy War were nothing but conflict, no Victory nor Triumph, of which the fallen Countenances, the diſconſolate and mournful tempers of true Chriſtians, go with them for more than probable arguments. This is the arrow taken out of *Satans* quiver, with which ſome think to wound Religion under the fifth Rib, and take off thoſe lines of Communication, from whence the Church of Chriſt ſhould receive a further encreaſe and ſupplement. There being few that can ſo far deny themſelves, as to come to that ſevere diſcipline, which knows no other Method of inſtruction than

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by the Rod. The greateſt part of men being of that Sanguine temper, as to reſolve not to come at that board, where tears muſt be their meat day and night. And that they muſt not expect any better entertainment who put themſelves into theſe commons, they have a more than probable gueſs, from the moiſtned and drery Eyes of its beſt profeſſors, (as we have already hinted.) The diſconſolate and dejected frame theſe ſeem to be of, is no ſmall impediment, to hinder others from turning regulars of ſuch an order. *Gemitum habent pro cantu*, and this is ſufficient to affright, and ſcare away thoſe who are ready to flock as Doves to the Windows. And ſhall it be laid to our charge when the Lord hath lift up our heads to that height, as the pardon of ſin could raiſe them, that we ſhould hinder thoſe who would be a willing people in the day of Gods power, that we ſhould cramp thoſe wheels which would otherwiſe be as the Chariots of *Aminadab?* I may ſay as *David* in another caſe, this is our infirmity. Hath the Lord waſht us throughly from our iniquities, and cleanſed us from our ſins? hath he anointed us with the Oyl of gladneſs and made us partakers of his holy unction? why then ſhould we ever appear with a ſad and dejected countenance, whereby others are diſpirited

diſpirited and induced to think hardly of the waies of truth? Who will care to pluck the fruit of the Tree of life, when thoſe who have taſted and ſeen what it is make a ſower face? 'Tis obſerved in natural fountains, that their waters aſcend as high as the Spring head from whence they flow. To what a pitch may the comfort of a Chriſtian riſe, whoſe Spring-head is the favour and Love of God, the pardon and forgiveneſs of ſin? Is Victory and Conqueſt the event and iſſue of our Conflict? do all our Enemies fall by thouſands on our ſide, and ten thouſand on our right hand? Hath the Lord cauſed us to Triumph over all Spiritual wickednesſes, though in the higheſt places? Hath he made *Satan* to flee before us? Can we with St. *Paul* ſay; *Oh Death, where is thy Sting? Oh Grave, where is thy Victory?* The Sting of Death is ſin, and that is pluckt out, ſo that we can ſet our feet upon the Adder, tread upon the young Lion, and trample *Satan* that fiery Dragon under our feet? Can we ſay that we are Conquerours, nay more, through him that hath loved us and pardoned our ſin for us? Hath he (with ſuch ſucceſs) enabled us to manage the weapons of our Spiritual welfare, which are not carnal? Let us then ſing our ἐπινίκιον. Such a Triumph may invite o-

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thers into the Tents of the Lord of Hosts, and to list themselves under the banner of him that is the Captain of our Salvation. Thou who hast obtained mercy to be accounted faithful, tell to others what God hath done for thy Soul. How great and invaluable thy returns have been since thy traffick, since the Trade thou hast driven to Heaven, thou wilt invite others to venture to the same port. When *Cæsar* heard of the trophies of *Alexander*, how he had slain mighty Kings, and subdued the nations under him, he could never be contented till he had furbushed his own Sword, and being instigated by so great an Example, could not be satisfied till he had put the world uuder his feet. Let thy Spiritual joy and rejoicing be known to all men. Let thy Triumphs and Trophies, be every where manifest which thou hast gained over sin and *Satan*. It will be a great argument to others to buckle on the whole armour of Light, and never to give over till they have gained the same Victory, prepared with as much Satisfaction and Ease to lay down in the Grave, and composed themselves to sleep in the dust, as in their beds.

3. Let us labour for this joy for its own sake as well as of others, [For 'tis lasting and permanent,]

permanent,] it will abide for ever. There's no worm can cauſe this goard to fade. If this plant be once ſet (by him, whom *Mary* ſuppoſed to be the Gardiner) the leaves of it never ſhed, its top never withers. 'Tis a jewel of that immarceſcible Crown that fadeth not away, reſerved in the Heavens for us. This is a ſtrong hold which all the batteries of the world can never force, no weapon formed againſt it can proſper, it lies beyond the power of all its attempts. The worſt it can do is to deſtroy its outward and bodily comforts, but this Spiritual joy which is the Soul and life of all its peace, is beyond its reach; This it cannot give, this it cannot take away. If the Lord hath ſpoken peace, where's the tongue that can ſpeak trouble? This is a mark which the arrows that flye by day alwaies miſs, nor can the terrour which walk by night ever overtake it. 'Tis true, the fire from Heaven conſumed *Jobs* ſheep; The winds overſet his houſe and ſlew his Children. The *Caldeans* and the *Sabeans* robbed him of his Cammels, and took away his Oxen: But his integrity his joy in the Lord was that ſure mercy, which none were able to break through and ſteal. 'Tis ſubject to no outward accident, it out-lives the higheſt ſtorms the world can raiſe again it, defeats and baffles

baffles the greateſt projects,and moſt deſigned forecaſts it can contrive againſt it. The Chriſtian whoſe ſin is pardoned, and peace made, is got beyond the threats, and hath outſtript the menaces of its moſt malicious and inveterate enemies, they are not careful to anſwer them in any matter,*jacta eis eſt alea.* The God in whom they truſt is able and will deliver them. So that this joy muſt ſtand when the builder and maker of it is the Lord their God. The worldly mans joy is but like the Crackling of Thorns under the Pot, a blaſt that's ſoon extinguiſhed. *Haman* experimented this when all his honour hung upon *Ahaſuerus*'s brow, and was blaſted in the twinkling of his Eye. He was in honour, but he ſoon became like the beaſt that periſheth. The parable of *Joaſh* in 2 *Chron.* 25. 18. may be, I think, in this caſe applyed. That whilſt the Thiſtle was in treaty about a marriage with the *Cædar* in *Lebanon*, the Ox came and trod it under foot. Such is the nature of the worldlingsjoy, ſubject to great uncertainties and accidents, 'tis like the graſs in the field,which to day is, and to morrow is caſt into the oven. But though the graſs withereth,and flower fadeth,yet this Spiritual joy endureth for ever; 'tis like mount *Sion*, it cannot be moved. 'Tis ſtronger than death,

death, it triumphs over it, it rejoyceth againſt that laſt Enemy; for thoſe many Waters which this Dragon pours out of its mouth cannot hurt it; thoſe waves may daſh againſt it, they cannot move it, for 'tis founded upon a Rock.

4. Rejoyce in the Lord who hath pardoned thy ſin, [becauſe this will illuſtrate God's honour;] Thou wilt hereby declare the goodneſs of the Lord to the Children of men. He that praiſeth the Lord, glorifies him. He that rejoyceth in his ſalvation, magnifies him which is the Author of it. This will ſhew that he was mighty to ſave, who pluckt thee as a fire-brand out of the fire, with a ſtrong hand, with a ſtretched out arm. This joy will ſhew that it was a mighty deliverance, that he hath broken the Gates of Braſs, and cut the Bars of Iron in ſunder. He would not leave thy Soul in Hell, nor ſuffer thee his holy one to ſee corruption. But hath broken the Fetters of darkneſs, and tranſlated thee into the glorious light and liberty of the Sons of God. This thy rejoicing will declare who it was, and what was his name and his Sons name, that hath done this, *viz.* The Lord Jeſus Chriſt, the mighty God, the everlaſting Father, the

It will give him the glory, .. Of his power, 1. In Redeeming.

Prince of Peace, that it was his arm that brought Salvation, and no other, he that took up the mountains of thy sins, and cast them into the depths of the Sea.

2. In Preserving. Nor will thy joy only give him the glory of his power in redeeming thee; But also in preserving thee in that Estate wherein he hath placed thee. Thou art become a Star in his right hand, and let the joy and light of thy countenance declare that thou art a fixed Star in that firmament, and held too fast for any to pluck thee out. Our calling and election are precious things. But their being made sure is that which makes our joy to be full, and the fulness of that joy shews that the Crown of glory hangs not by any slender thread: But that the almighty arm of the Lord hath so far setled and secured it, that none can take it from us. If the Merchant hath a considerable adventure at Sea he knows not how to sleep till it be ensured. *Saul*, though he were King of *Israel*, yet when he saw the Philistines were about to take away his Crown from him, refused to eat bread, but cast himself upon the ground, nor would he be comforted. Were the Kingdom of Heaven Subject to such casualties, were we at *Satans* mercy to be led

Captive

Captive at his will, we ſhould hang our harps upon the willows, nor ſhould we know how to ſing the Song of the Lord in a ſtrange Land. But ſeeing our *Canaan* is an inheritance which depends upon a more ſure word of promiſe, let us rejoyce in him, that we may magnify him who maintains the Lot of our inheritance, let us caſt our care upon him, who preſerves us by his mighty power through faith unto Salvation. No wonder *Jobs* ſighing came before he ate, and his roarings were poured out like waters, for his condition (as he apprehended) was as unſtable as waters. I was not in ſafety, neither had I reſt, neither was I quiet. Job 3. 26. But when the bird of paradiſe ſings upon the tender branches, we may conclude its neſt is built upon the Rock of ages. Doth he eat his bread with cheerfulneſs, and drink his Wine with a merry heart? His bread then cannot fail, his waters muſt be ſure.

2. Of his faithfulneſs.

This will give him the honour of his faithfulneſs and truth. This joy ſpeaks our dependance upon his word, who hath ſworn and will not lye unto *David*. This made St. *Paul* have a Calm in his breaſt, notwithſtanding the Ship was toſſed with Tempeſt, and no ſmall ſtorm

lay upon it, *Acts* 27. 25. Wherefore Sirs, be of good cheer, for I believe God, that it ſhall be even as it was told me; howbeit we muſt be caſt upon a certain Iſland. God had ſpoken, and he knew that not one jot or tittle of his word ſhould fail, nor one hair ſhould fall from the head of any that was on board. This tranquillity and peace, the joy which came from believing, ſpoke the immutability and faithfulneſs of his promiſe, that when he hath ſworn, 'tis impoſſible for the ſtrength of *Iſrael* to lye. Is our joy green and flouriſhing? this then is the Root that bears it, and from whence it derives its ſap and nouriſhment. For 'tis a ruſh that cannot grow up without mire, a flag that muſt wither in its greenneſs without water. He that hears the Lord promiſing that he will blot out iniquity, tranſgreſſion and ſin, for his names ſake, and will not remember his ſins: He remembers God, and is comforted. For he knows, that though the labour of the Olive ſhould fail, though the field ſhould not yield its increaſe: Though the Heavens be wound up as a Scroll, and the Elements melt away with fervent heat, yet the word of the Lord ſhall not fail, but endures for ever; When a tree hath a large and towring top,

Iſa. 43. 25.

Job 8. 11.

Iſa. 43. 25.

top, lifting up up its head on high, outliving the force and violence of the winds, we muſt conclude it well rooted and grounded in the Earth: Does the Saint (who is as a tree planted by the Rivers of water) bear up with a green and flouriſhing top againſt the moſt impetuous ſtorms and temptations? It muſt be from hence, he is rooted, he is grounded in the faith. Could there be any thing that could diſanul or make the promiſe of none effect, how would the Chriſtians comforts flag? his joy would ſoon become a withered branch. Could the promiſe fail, the Anchor of our faith muſt ſlip, we muſt ſuffer Shipwrack of our richeſt lading, *viz.* Our conſolation and joy. When *Ahab* truſted to a lying Spirit, we find the event was as ſad as the cauſe of his confidence was falſe and deceitful. But ſuch is the wiſdom of the juſt, as to build upon the tried foundation, I mean the truth and faithfulneſs of the almighty, which is elect and precious. I may apply the words of *Seneca* in this ſenſe. *Quis bono confidat fragili.* No wiſe man will build upon the Sand, or rejoyce in that which either will or can deceive him. Pſal. 1. *Senec. in Hippolito.*

If the pardon of ſin be ſo deſirable a thing, eſpecially in the latter 5. Exhort.

end; [then let us entreat the Lord so to preserve us, that we may not for any terrours or pains of death fall from him.] Satan will then desire to winnow us, oh let us pray that he would not suffer our faith to fail. 'Tis no small entanglement to have the snares of death encompass us. No little misery to have the pains of Hell take hold upon us: And as great wisdom not to loose our hold upon that strength which is able to save us, upon that God who is only able to pardon our transgression. St. *Paul* saith, When I am weak, then am I strong. When we are weak, when our heart and our strength faileth us, then let us be strong in the power of his might. When this storm runs high, and the waves ride upon each others backs, may we then take heed that our Anchors slip not. Oh Lord, let not our faith then fail. If our hands should now sink down, Satan will prevail against us. We are supposed now to be at the very mouth of the harbour, and 'tis a streight and dangerous passage into it. Shall we not beg, and that earnestly, of our Saviour, to be our Pilot in order to a safe arrival. Let us tell him that the last enemy which is to be destroy'd hath given thee thy deadly wound, that will kill thy body; let's entreat the Lord that his Commission may

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not extend to our Souls, for if we be bereaved of them we are bereaved. Let's tell him we are his, we are bought with a price; let us beg of him then, that Sin and Satan may not finally defeat him of ſo dear a purchaſe. When *David*'s Worthies brought him water from the Well of *Bethlehem*, he would not drink of it, becauſe it was ſo dearly bought; it was the Blood of thoſe men who went in jeopardy of their lives. Let us then plead with God, that ſeeing we are the price of Blood, that Death and Hell may not ſwallow us up. Now it is that the Grave and Hell gape, may they not then ſhut their Mouths upon us; theſe roaring Lions will tear us in pieces, if there be none to deliver us. If the Lord Jeſus Chriſt, who is the Son of *David*, take them not by the Beard, ſmite them, and ſlay them. But beſides this, there is in us an evil Heart of unbelief in departing from the living God, & that in this great agony & diſtreſs, like Chriſt's Diſciples when their Maſter was taken, we ſhall be apt like them to forſake him and flee, if he keeps us not. The poor Soul is now often beſet by Satan, and the Heart and Conſcience inſtigated to tempt and terrifie it; ſolliciting it (as once *Job*'s Wife did her patient Husband) to curſe God and die: Now it may be it ſets thy ſin in or-

der before thee, and tells thee 'tis a greater debt than thou art ever able to pay; and being thus insolvend, thy sins are more than can be forgiven: Thus is this Pen dipt in Gall, and writes bitter things against thee. When thou art ready to sleep in the dust, it scareth thee with Dreams, and frights thee with the Visions of an Eternal Night. Will not every good, every wise man call upon the Lord at such a time as this is, to deliver him from his Enemy, who else will be too strong for him; to hold him fast, or else he will pluck him out of his hand? We have sinned 'tis true, and are come short of the glory of God; but there is mercy, that he may be feared, plenteous redemption, that he may be sought unto. Oh! let us pray that this Hope may not fail, that this Anchor may not slip, lest we be left in a dangerous, in a desperate Estate. *Job* seemed to be now like a bowing Wall, like a tottering Fence, and as much afraid that by the blast of God he should perish. His Sun was (he thought) going down the last degrees of his Dial, but loth he was it should rise no more; and therefore with what Spiritual passion and fervency doth he supplicate the Almighty to pardon his transgressions, and to take away his iniquity? An excellent pattern for

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a departing Soul, whom methinks I hear thus pleading and expoſtulating with his Maker, I am now, as I hope, a Child of God, but it doth not appear what I ſhall be. I now ſtand, but, Lord, if thou holdeſt me not I muſt fall; the terrors and torment of my condition are ſo great, that I water my Couch with my tears, and my roarings are poured out like water, which make me exceedingly to fear and tremble, *Job* 3. 24. And what influence theſe extremities may have upon my weak Faith I know not; I am at the very brink of the Pit, I am come ſo near the Mount of God that it may be toucht; I have but one ſtep betwixt me and Eternity; but my knees are ſo feeble, my ankle Bones ſo weak, that unleſs thou ordereſt my ſteps I ſhall ſet them amiſs. This is the hour of temptation, and though thou haſt not kept me from it, yet keep me in it; my God, my God, do not thou forſake me, leſt I depart from thee. I can at no time follow thee unleſs thou draweſt me, but now I am in ſo great a croud of troubles, ſo thronged with a Legion of evils, that 'tis impoſſible to touch the hem of thy Garment, unleſs thou makeſt way for mine approach. Lord, mine Eyes are heavy with the ſleep of death. The Evening is very dark and gloomy, and my tranſ-

transgressions and iniquities are those thick Clouds which make it so; I humbly beg of thee to scatter that thick darkness, that light may spring up, that the day Spring from on high may visit me, that when I shall awake, I may be satisfied with thy likeness; and in the Morning when thou shalt seek me I may be found, not having mine own righteousness, but that which is through Faith in the Son of God. O Lord, when sickness shall shake me, may I not drop as an untimely Fruit; but being made ripe for Heaven, let me be gathered to my Grave in peace, and (*a*) to the Spirits of just men made perfect; that being transplanted into the Paradise of God, I may become a Plant of righteousness, yea, a Tree of Life for ever, and ever. *Amen.*

(*a*) Ψυχῶν ἀσωμάτων ἱερότατον χορόν. *Animarum incorporearum sacratum chorum. Phil. lib. de Angelis. Vide Voss. de orig. & progress. Idololatriæ. lib. 1. cap. 6. Ad cœtum jam venis almum; Heroum blandis spirantem leniter auris. Oratuli responsum de reditu Plotini animæ.*

Oh præclarum diem! cum ad illud divinum animorum concilium cœtumq; proficiscar, & cum ex hâc turbâ & colluvione discedam. Cicer. de senectute.

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